An Apology

for the

British Government in Ireland

JOHN MITCHEL

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JOHN MITCHEL, 1845.

[From an unpublished Photograph.]

Coláiste Mhuire Gan Smál
Luimneach

AN APOLOGY

FOR THE

BRITISH GOVERNMENT IN IRELAND.

BY

JOHN MITCHEL.

With a Portrait.

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INTRODUCTION.

"To most Irishmen," says William Dillon, his biographer, "John Mitchel is the very embodiment of Ireland's passionate protest against English rule; and it is in this character that they best love to contemplate him. It is natural that Irishmen should take this view, and they will probably continue to take it. . . . But, for myself, I must admit that the character in which I best like to regard John Mitchel is that of a man of letters. His natural gifts qualified him to be, and in many respects he was, the greatest man of letters that Ireland has produced since Swift." The present writer's attitude is that of the author just quoted. Much of what Mitchel wrote is as true now as it was when it was published—a portion of it has been falsfied by events. But though he was not always a true prophet, he was essentially and invariably a good writer, and his earnestness and sincerity can never be questioned. He has written finer work than is in this little book, now reprinted because nearly all his deliberate writing deserves to be perpetuated, but time has not destroyed the vigour of his style, even if it has somewhat shaken the force of his illustrations and examples. He is one of those Irish writers who never hesitated, at no matter what cost to himself, to express his views on English methods of government, whether in Ireland or elsewhere, and that he suffered for his opinions is widely known. "I do not intend to claim for John Mitchel,"

says his biographer, "that he was a practical politician. But this I do claim, and hope to establish: that from the time when, in 1845, Mitchel first became a public man, down to the time of his death, some thirty years later, in every instance in which public duty, as he saw it, and self-interest came in conflict, duty was followed and interest disregarded." No Irishman will dispute Mr. Dillon's statement. The character of Mitchel is above reproach, and his perfect honesty gives a considerable value to what he has written about English rule. He was no hireling, paid to write in a certain way and for a certain purpose. He wrote exactly as he felt, and as we hear so much of what Ulster Protestants think about the necessity and virtue of British rule in Ireland, it cannot be uninteresting or without value to hear the views of an Ulster Presbyterian on this momentous subject.

O.

ORIGINAL PREFACE.

A SERIES of four Articles lately appeared in the *Constitutionnel*, by M. Marie-Martin, treating the whole question of Ireland's relation to English government in a fair and friendly spirit; and with very considerable knowledge of the subject.

Nevertheless the writer showed that he laboured under the delusion—too prevalent both amongst our interceding friends abroad, and our complaining agitators at home—that those terrible plagues which afflict Ireland, and make her name a scandal amongst mankind—might, could, or should be cured or alleviated, by means of a reform here and there, in the London Parliament, under the imperial legislation of the "United Kingdom."

If the case were so, English statesmen would, indeed, be liable to heavy censure and condemnation. Common justice, however, requires that they be heard before being condemned. If it can be made to appear in their behalf that not only the prosperity and progress, but the very existence of the British Empire as a Power in the world imperatively demands a continuation of every one of those plagues and scandals in Ireland, and that no British minister dares, on peril of his head, propose the abatement of any single one of them—then it will be clear that whoever may be the guilty party, *they* are acquitted.

If my "Apology," then, shall help to convince my countrymen, and the world—that the English are not

more sanguinary and atrocious than any other people would be in like case, and under like exigencies—that the disarmament, degradation, extermination and periodical destruction of the Irish people, are measures of policy dictated not by pure malignity but by the imperious requirements of the system of Empire administered in London—that they must go on, precisely as at present, while the British Empire goes on—and that there is no remedy for them under heaven save the dismemberment of that Empire—then the object of my writing shall have been attained.

JOHN MITCHEL.

PARIS, *Jan. 10th, 1860.*

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APOLOGY

FOR THE

BRITISH GOVERNMENT IN IRELAND.

CHAPTER I.

EUROPEAN CONGRESS—"REFORMS"—ENGLAND THE CHAMPION OF REFORMS—ENGLAND IN IRELAND—FIRST DUTY, FAMINE—PROVIDENTIAL INTERPOSITION.

Now that a Congress of the European Powers is about to meet to settle Europe; now that the rights and wrongs of different nations, their relations to one another, and their internal institutions—so far as these affect, or are likely to affect, general tranquility—are about to be brought up for discussion and revision; now that multifarious "reforms" are to be suggested, and even enforced, in the dominions of minor sovereigns, as the King of Naples, the Pope of Rome, the Sultan of Turkey, etc.—and that England is presenting herself before Europe as a champion, *the* champion, of nationalities, self-government, and reform; and her statesmen are encouraging subject nations to insurrection and revolution, and even subscribing money to purchase them arms for those purposes—not having the least idea all the time of sustaining them with British forces after they shall have taken British advice and involved themselves in war; now that public attention on

the continent of Europe begins to fix itself upon the system of government administered by England herself, and to ask whether there may not be some reforms required in that direction also; it may be useful to set down in good order, for the information of all concerned, the principles and practices of that government, as we experience them in "that portion of the United Kingdom" called Ireland.

I have observed that when an Irishman undertakes to narrate truly any of the dealings of the English Government towards his country, his statements, however calm in tone and unanswerable in fact, are sure to be denominated by the English Press *complaints*, or even whines or howls. Against this imputation I desire to guard myself as far as possible; and hereby declare, to begin with, that I neither complain, nor sympathise with those (if any) who do complain, against any part of the legislation or administration of English Government in Ireland. It is true that journalists and publicists on the Continent do frequently remonstrate with England upon her treatment of Ireland, and suggest that ameliorations should be made. It is true, also, I regret to say, that certain Irish writers and members of Parliament are so irrational as to waste their time in making real complaints and preferring claims, demands, petitions, for changes in the system by which Ireland is governed, while, at the same time, they profess attachment to the British Crown and Government.

I desire, however, to approach the subject in a more philosophic spirit; and to hope to prove that the government of the British Empire is administered in Ireland with as much lenity, kindness, and indulgence as is compatible with the continued existence of that British Empire as a Power in the world.

As to the value of that same British Empire and the

virtue of its influence upon human affairs, there are two opinions. Some do hold that it is a great and beneficent Power, an example and a bulwark of liberty, a great Providential agency for humanising and civilising mankind —or, as Lord Brougham says, a beacon to guide the nations through their darkness to a brighter future. Others, on the contrary, pretend that it is a vast organised imposture; a machine for *exploiting* nations; and unmixed and unredeemed mischief, whose fruits are torture in India, opium in China, famine in Ireland, pauperism in England, disturbance and disorder in Europe, and robbery everywhere. Between these two opposite appreciations I do not mean to pronounce; but assuming the *first* opinion to be true, and that the aforesaid Empire is indeed a precious possession for the world, then I hold and mean to prove that Ireland is well governed. Every logical mind will assent to the proposition, that omelettes cannot continue to be manufactured without a continual breaking of eggs. No more can the British Empire stand or go, without famine in Ireland, opium in China, torture in India, pauperism in England, and all the rest of the apparatus. You cannot have a British Empire and repudiate the conditions *sine quâ non*. There stands your British Empire, and here is what it costs: every one can determine at his leisure whether it be worth its price; but with that question I do not at present meddle.

Let the reader try to imagine himself in the position of one of the advisers of Queen Victoria: let him take that point of view: let him fancy himself entrusted by his sovereign with a seat in the councils of the Empire. Surely he sits there not to undermine and destroy, but to preserve, strengthen, extend, and make it triumphant. Such being the case, I mean to show, so far as Ireland

alone is concerned (prætermitting all consideration of India, China, European disorders and British pauperism) that—

First, it is the duty of British statesmen to take such measures as shall ensure periodical famines in Ireland.

Second, it is their duty—when those famines come—to increase and cherish them, and protract their operation to the utmost possible extent.

Third, it is their absolute duty to prevent a Celtic peasantry from having any proprietary interest in the land; and to that end they are bound to resist all movements in favour of *Tenant-right*—the establishment of which would be (regarded from their point of view) highly immoral.

Fourth, it is their sacred duty to break down the influence of the Catholic clergy and destroy the Catholic religion, which has always been a powerful and vital element of Irish nationality as distinguished from the *esprit de corps* of the British Empire. From whence it follows, that—

Fifth, they have a perfect right, and it is their indispensable duty, to maintain by State endowments the Anglican Church; and

Sixth, to maintain also by State endowments a "mixed" system of education, whose class-books shall be carefully purified from all allusions to Ireland and her history, and from all references to the things called patriotism and nationality.

Seventh, it is their solemn duty to pack juries.

Eighth, it is their duty to prevent the Irish people from possessing arms or knowing how to use such instruments; and, accordingly, when the "United Kingdom" is in

danger of foreign invasion, it is their duty to prevent the Irish from forming volunteer rifle-companies.

Ninth, it is their duty to stop, open, and copy, in the Post-office, the letters of suspected persons.

Tenth, it is their solemn duty, and must be their especial care, to contradict flatly everything that an Irishman shall say about his own country, unless it be a falsehood; in which case they are to let it pass.

These ten duties are incumbent upon British ministers; and we all know that England expects every man to *do* his duty. If any gentleman can point out wherein they have materially failed to do it in every one of these departments, then let us admit they are blameable to that extent: but the purpose of my present writing is to demonstrate that, taking into account the limited scope of human faculties, it may be pronounced impossible to labour more zealously and effectually in all these several departments than each successive English ministry has done. For whatever be their differences, as Whig and Tory, about Corn-laws, tariffs, or foreign policy, they are all at least unanimous upon this matter. Here they are true British statesmen, and cannot, dare not, be otherwise. They might take up the exclamation of Luther before the Diet, and cry "God help me! I can do no other." Seriously and earnestly I wish that the Irish would cease blaming and abusing these men, and desist altogether from entreating them to act otherwise than they do. It cannot be: these men have an omelette to make, and must break the eggs—an eel-pie, and must skin the eels.

To take the topics in due sequence, I begin with the policy of British famines in Ireland.

The term "British Famines" may sound harsh, and it is my wish above all things to avoid harshness, especially as

I intend not to blame but to compliment. Doubtless it would be more courteous to term these periodical famines "Dispensations of Providence;" but it would not be true. Ever since the legislative "Union" of England and Ireland, in 1800, there had been continual, annual, and perennial hunger and hardship in Ireland; but during all that same period Ireland, being the most fertile country on earth, was producing at least double as much as would have sustained all her own people in comfort.

The great produce was needed to feed the English and keep up the British Empire; and it has been already laid down that whatsoever was needful to this end, *that* it was the duty of British legislators and ministers to accomplish.

In 1845 commenced the last and greatest of the periodical Famines. In 1847 a government statistical commissioner, Captain Larcom, made a careful census of the agricultural produce of Ireland, for that year—it was then the very middle of that terrible agony of Famine-slaughter—and found the total value of it to be £44,958,120 sterling, which was sufficient to feed—not nine millions, the actual population of the island, but eighteen millions, of human beings! What became of all that produce? The English ate it. How had *they* the money to buy it, and the Irish had not? Because Irish money goes to England to pay rent to absentee landlords, and to pay for British manufactures—the Irish manufactures having been suppressed by laws made for this express purpose. So that Irishmen sent to England not only their herds and harvests, but money to buy them withal.

When the Irish nation, then being nine millions, produced by their own industry on their own land good food enough to feed eighteen millions, one cannot well say that

Providence sent them a famine; and when those nine millions dwindled in two or three years to six and a half millions, partly by mere hunger, and partly by flight beyond sea to escape it; and when we find all these same years the English people living well and feeding full, upon that very food for want of which the Irish died; I suppose the term British Famine will be admitted to be quite correct. But what then? *Ex hypothesi*, it is good and right to keep up the British Empire and to provide for the due payment of British wages and activity of British business—and there is no use in wishing for the end and condemning the means.

But this great subject of Irish Famines, and the duties incumbent upon British statesmen in reference to said Famines—namely, to cultivate and develop them to the uttermost, and make sure of a due succession of them—needs some further illustration. You may possibly imagine that it is useless to write down and print for Irish readers things which they must be supposed to know very well; but in fact the present writing is in great part for the information of foreigners; and, moreover, I must be allowed to doubt if the Irish people themselves are at all fully aware how very essential to the British Empire is their destruction, and their children's destruction, by fire, famine or slaughter, whenever they overpass a certain limited number. Even in 1848 and 1849, when havoc was raging at its worst, I do not believe that many even of our own countrymen understood the plan and the machinery, or could have believed it if explained and pointed out. Neither did many Englishmen, though they profited by it, at all give themselves the trouble to comprehend the details of that arrangement by which their government was providing for them. Neither could they have very well

understood it, though clearly expounded to them; for, although their stomachs may be good, their brains are muddy. As to foreigners, they know little or nothing at all about the matter.

Therefore, I shall proceed in another chapter to show, by means of public documents, that the great increase of population in Ireland had long been a source of uneasiness to the English Government—that immediately before the last great famine, British statesmen had been at their wits' end to devise some method of getting rid of those multitudinous Celts by emigration and extermination—that the potato-blight, when it came, was hailed by the aforesaid statesmen as a truly Providential interposition to relieve the British Empire of much bad blood—that it was deliberately used, encouraged, aggravated, and perpetuated for this express purpose; and that the British Empire (which is, by the supposition, a valuable thing to mankind) was for that time saved by the prudent destruction of about three million Celts.

CHAPTER II.

"SURPLUS POPULATION"—SURPLUS PRODUCE—PROJECTS TO REDUCE THE SURPLUS—BRITISH PROVIDENCE.

I AM very well and keenly alive to the responsibility of the task I have undertaken—namely, to prove that the British Government encouraged and aggravated Famine in Ireland, to thin the population; and well aware that he who states such a thing without the means of establishing it incurs heavy guilt.

On the other hand, if the thing be true, it is highly necessary to be told; for I find that not only foreigners, but even many of the Irish themselves, are even now under the impression that during those famine years the English Government did actually use its best efforts, not to aggravate, but to relieve the distress. M. Martin, indeed, the able writer who has so lately given an *exposé* of the state of Ireland in the *Constitutionnel*, seems to have somehow caught a glimpse of the truth, when, after considering the series of acts to make extermination easier and cheaper, he remarks, "it seems to have been the study of the British Government to facilitate this species of legal injustice;" and when he repeats the saying of an Irish writer—that "British Law helped the Famine, and the Famine helped British Law." To explain how skilfully and effectually all this was done is my present task.

First: we find that in all English publications of the last thirty years, dealing with the condition of Ireland, there is continual reference to the "surplus population" of that

country. Surplus population, in any country, ought to mean, I suppose, more people than the country itself can give employment and support to: so it would be in any independent country which rules itself. But as I have undertaken the defence of the British Government, I must look from this point of view. "Surplus population" is a comparative term, and its meaning will vary according to what it may be that the said population is *wanted* for. Now, the sole use for an Irish population—considered from an English point of view—is to raise provisions for the English to consume, make up rents to be spent in England, and take off a large quantity of English manufactures: and if there be more than the number required to cultivate the soil, or tend cattle on the pastures, under the most improved system of high-farming and cattle-feeding, for English markets, then, there is *surplus*. This surplus had been growing and multiplying, as I said, for many years before the Famine; and the best way to get rid of it had occupied some of the most sagacious pens in England. But along with this phenomenon of an increasing and oppressive surplus of people, there had been another kind of "surplus" also swelling and becoming enormous.

"Surplus Produce," according to the best political economists, means the balance remaining for export over and above what is needed for the consumption of the people; and so it would be in any independent country which rules itself; but British writers, regarding Ireland, very naturally, as a store-farm of theirs, think fit to term all the grain and meat which is actually carried away from Ireland, the "surplus produce" of that island, whether the people have enough for their own consumption or not. Just at the commencement of the terrible Irish Famine, in 1846, both these two sorts of surplus, the people and the

food, had reached their *maximum*. It was estimated then in Ireland that there were at least three millions too many people; and as to the surplus of produce, it was regularly going over to England at the rate of seventeen millions worth *per annum*. Ireland was perhaps the only country in the world that could boast of having a surplus of people and a surplus of agricultural productions both at once—too much food for her people and too many people for her food.

It must not be forgotten that, during all the Famine years, Ireland was actually producing sufficient food, and wool and flax, to feed and clothe, not nine, but eighteen millions of people *somewhere*.

There had been grievous famines in 1817, in 1823, and less destructive famines every year in Ireland since the Union; so that the best method of once for all reducing the "surplus" within manageable bounds, had been eagerly sought by English philanthropists—that is, to reduce the surplus of *people*, not the other surplus. In any independent country it would have at once occurred to an ordinary mind that the two surplusages could have been made to swallow one another—that is, the surplus of people could have swallowed the surplus of food, and then there would have been no surplus at all. But, again, remember, I am writing in the English interest, and it is enough to say that the British Empire *needed* that seventeen millions per annum from Ireland to be spent in England, just as she requires the revenues of Indian rajahs to support her younger sons in the style which they have a right to expect. The projects, then, which I am going to mention were all, of course, aiming at the reduction of the *other* surplus.

In 1844, the surplus population of Ireland had become truly alarming to English politicians. At the call of

O'Connell it had paraded itself in masses half-a-million strong in various parts of Ireland—all demanding "Repeal of the Union," that is, the dismemberment of the British Empire. The necessity of thinning it off became more than ever apparent and urgent. The English Government in that year issued a Commission, called "Landlord and Tenant Commission," to inquire and report on the best means of ameliorating the condition of Landlord and Tenant in Ireland. We all knew what that meant; especially as the Commissioners were all landlords, and their chairman, Lord Devon, not only a landlord, but an absentee. To consult these men, said O'Connell, about the rights of tenants, is "consulting butchers on the keeping of Lent."

They reported substantially *thus*—

It is necessary to disallow Tenant-Right.

It is absolutely necessary to consolidate farms, and remove (exterminate) about two hundred thousand heads of families, with all their wives and little children.

It is advisable to encourage Emigration.

From Lord Devon's "Digest of the Evidence," stating the general conclusions of the committee, I give four sentences, which are never to be forgotten—

"The Commissioners forsee some danger to the just rights of property from the unlimited allowance of *this Tenant-right.*"

Speaking of the *consolidation of farms*, they say—

"When it is seen in the evidence, and in the return of the size of the farms, how small those holdings are, it cannot be denied that such a step is *absolutely necessary.*"

They refer to one of their Tables (No. 95, p. 564), where—

"The calculation is put forward showing that the consolidation of the small holdings up to eight acres would require the

removal of about one hundred and ninety-two thousand three hundred and sixty-eight *families* "—representing fully one million of people.

As to the people whom it was thus necessary to eject, they say—

"*Emigration* is considered by the committee to be peculiarly applicable as a remedial measure."

Here was the whole programme—disallowance of Tenant-Right, extermination of tenantry, and emigration. This Report was made the very year before the Famine began. And it must be remembered that at the same moment there were four millions of acres of *arable waste lands* in Ireland, crying aloud for hands to till them.

But in further proof of the anxious desire and urgent necessity which English statesmen felt to get rid of the Irish "surplus," somehow, take another official document.

In 1847, a "Select Committee" of the House of Lords brought up a Report on the "Colonisation of Ireland," in which they gave a kind of *resumé* of the conclusions of all former legislative committees on Irish affairs; and they report that all those former committees, though differing on minor details, had agreed (with one exception), at least on one fundamental point—that it was necessary in some way to remove the "excess of labour." The only inquiry was, to what part of the world; and, accordingly, they say—

"They have taken evidence respecting the state of Ireland, of the British North American Colonies (including Canada, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland), the West India Islands, New South Wales, Port Philip, South Australia, Van Diemen's Land, and New Zealand.

"The committee are fully aware that they have as yet examined into many points but superficially, and that some, as for example, the state of the British possessions in Southern Africa and in the territory of Natal, have not yet been considered at all."

The very last thing this noble committee would have thought of was to suffer the Irish people to live at home in their own country.

But though they refer with satisfaction to the general unanimity of Parliamentary Committees on this great point, their Lordships say they find "with surprise" that there was one exception. In fact, in 1836, a committee of the Commons had given expression to these extraordinary sentiments which were well calculated not only to surprise, but to disgust their Lordships.

"It may be doubted [said that surprising Committee] whether the country does contain a sufficient quantity of labour to develope its resources: and while the empire is loaded with taxation to defray the charges of its wars, it appears most politic to use its internal resources for *improving the condition of its population*, by which the revenue of the exchequer must be increased, *rather than encourage emigration*, by which the revenue would suffer diminution, or than leave the labouring classes in their present state, by which poverty, crime, and the charges of government must be inevitably extended."

The same anomalous Report had expressed the strongest opinion against Poor Laws, especially in the form of "Out-door relief"—had reported, in short, directly against the whole system of British policy in Ireland. I have had a curiosity to know the names of so perverse a committee: there were twenty-four Irishmen to nine Englishmen, so no wonder they fell into so Hibernian a mistake. Amongst the Irish names were men of all parties; Colonel Conolly and Mr. O'Connell, Mr. Lefroy and Mr. Smith O'Brien, Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Fergus O'Connor—even Whigs, Mr. Wise, Mr. Shiel, and The O'Conor Don. Of course more care was thereafter taken in the selection of Committees upon Irish affairs.

Well, there is now evidence enough that English states-

men had long felt and declared, whether right or wrong, that a very large diminution of the Irish population was an absolute necessity of British policy: and I think they were right and not wrong. That those nine millions of people should be not only allowed to live, but have their "condition improved" (according to the suggestion of the Hibernian Committee), would have required the diversion of a great part of the Irish rental and produce from its usual course—which is to England. If those Irish were to live on the produce of their own labour, there must have been exactly equal reduction in English wages, incomes, dividends: less money would have been paid into English shops and would have changed hands on English race-courses. As my present duty, then, is to defend the English Government, and maintain that those statesmen were right and not wrong: that England should live, and live *well*, it was absolutely necessary for vast numbers of the Irish to die, or to flee to the ends of the earth.

Three millions of them have since died in agony, or fled in terror.

For Providence, says the English, graciously interposed at the right moment. The affair had come to a crisis: the Irish were nine millions, and were imperatively demanding their national Legislature. They had even studiously declined, in all the excitement of their agitation, to give an enlightened government the slightest excuse for letting loose troops and making a *battue* of them. What was to be done? The spirit of the Age was entirely averse to that project of Dean Swift, namely, taking nine in every ten of the young children and cooking and eating them: for England is now one of the kindest and tenderest of countries, and all the finer sensibilities of the heart revolt against roast baby. It was just at this juncture that the potato crop of

Ireland failed; and, by great good fortune (still looking from the British point of view), Sir Robert Peel was Prime Minister of England.

The total value of the loss of that crop, the first year of Famine, was estimated by Mr. Labouchere in Parliament at sixteen millions sterling. This was in January, 1846. In that year, 1846, the "surplus produce" of Ireland as well as her surplus population reached its very highest figure. By every tide that ebbed and flowed during that year many heavy cargoes of Irish produce floated off to England: it was necessary to England, in order to maintain her establishment and keep her a first-rate power in the world.

Therefore, it was the indispensable duty of the English statesman to take care that this export should continue.

It was also *necessary*—this has been already established—to thin the Irish population.

And, withal, it was further necessary that Great Britain, a power standing in the first rank of civilization, and conspicuous above all for benevolence, should throughout all these transactions preserve the show of philanthropy and "amelioration." I mean to say that Sir Robert Peel, finding himself Prime Minister of England at that crisis, and bearing in mind the uniform tradition of British policy in Ireland, was bound by the most solemn duty to seize the occasion thus providentially presented, to slay certain millions of Irish people, but with every appearance of kindness—that is, to relieve and ameliorate them out of their lives; and at the same time to make sure that the food produced in Ireland should duly go to England in the same quantity as before. If he had not done so, he would have been flying in the face of the British Providence.

In two future chapters I shall recapitulate the means by which Sir Robert Peel, and his successor, Lord John

Russell, faithfully accomplished their task in all its departments. So that I hope the impartial reader will acknowledge that those coroner's juries which afterwards, sitting upon starved corpses, found verdicts of "wilful murder against John Russell, commonly called Lord John Russell," were altogether in the wrong; the verdict ought to have been, justifiable homicide.

Afterwards I shall devote two or three chapters to the other matters lightly touched on by M. Martin in the *Constitutionnel*, and shew that in the affairs of education and religion also, as well as *arms acts* and packed juries, the government has done and continues to do its simple duty as a British government: no more and no less.

But first of the exploitation of the Famine.

CHAPTER III.

DUTIES OF A GOVERNMENT—"ALMS"—BOOK-KEEPING BY DOUBLE ENTRY—DUTIES OF OTHER GOVERNMENTS—AMOUNT OF THE LOSS—IRISH IDEAS—BOTANY AND CHEMISTRY — O'CONNELL'S SUGGESTIONS — FAMINE HARVEST HOME—"RELIEF."

On the first November, 1845, it was known to all Ireland and England that the crop of roots on which the mass of the Irish people were reduced to exist had been utterly blighted. Such a visitation falling suddenly upon any land certainly imposes onerous duties on its *de facto* government.

Now all the powers, revenues and resources of Ireland had been transferred to London. The Imperial Parliament had dealt at its pleasure with the "sister-island" for forty-six years; and at the end of all this time, while England had been advancing rapidly in wealth, power, and prosperity, Ireland, on her side of the account, had accumulated a Famine. For about two years, Ireland had been urgently demanding back those powers, revenues, and resources; and the English people, through their Executive, Parliament, and Press, had unanimously vowed this must never be. They would govern us in spite of us, "under the blessings of Divine Providence," as the Queen said in one of her "speeches." Were the Union *gall*, said the *Times*, swallow it you must.

Well, then, whatsoever duties may be supposed to devolve upon a government, in case of such a national calamity,

rested on the English Government. We had no legislature at home: in the Imperial Parliament we had but a delusive semblance of representation; and so totally useless was it that *national* Irish members, who were above craving for little places, preferred to stay at home.

It is fair to state that England readily admitted her responsibility, and joyfully undertook the duties, as we shall see.

It has been very carefully inculcated upon the world by the English press, that the moment Ireland fell into distress, she became an abject beggar at England's gate—nay, that she even craved alms from all mankind. Many foreigners are surprised when they are informed—as the fact is—that neither Ireland, nor anybody in Ireland, ever asked alms, or favours of any kind either from England or from any other nation or people; but that, on the contrary, it was England herself who begged for us, and sent round the hat over all the globe, asking for a penny for the love of God to relieve the poor Irish; and, further, that, constituting herself the almoner and agent of all that charity, she, England took all the profit of it: in other words embezzled it, lest the intentions of British Providence should be impiously frustrated.

In the accounts between the two islands for those forty-six years, England kept the books: an art in which she is perfectly well skilled. She had set down against Ireland the three millions of money which she herself had spent in buying up nomination boroughs and bribing members to carry the "Union;" but I am not prepared to say that she put to our debit (as has been alleged) the price of the knife with which Lord Castlereagh cut his throat. It is needless to observe that a large part of the duties paid by Irishmen towards the common Exchequer for those forty-six years—

namely, the duties on colonial and continental goods, purchased in England for Irish consumption—is always reckoned as so much revenue contributed by England. But it is impossible here and now to go into that long account. Enough to say, that after all which any skilful book-keeper could have the face to charge to Ireland's account—after the "consolidation" of the debts, which at once brings in Ireland debtor to five millions sterling a year for interest on a debt which is not hers—after all this, Ireland was then, in 1845, remitting to England *surplus* revenue to the amount of nearly a million per annum: all expended on public works in England. When the famine broke out, also, O'Connell pointed to the fact, that the "Quit and Crown Rents," drawn from Ireland under the head of *Woods and Forests*, amounted to about £60,000, expended mainly in beautifying Trafalgar-square and Windsor Castle.

And this takes no account of the five millions a-year absentee rent.

On the whole, therefore, we verily believed that the British Empire *owed* us something.

Other Governments, ruling independent nations, for the benefit of those nations, and *not* of foreigners, would, on the occurrence of a total blight of the crop on which most of their people live, at once prohibit the export, at least, of such provisions as they have. France has done so repeatedly: in those very famine years, Belgium and Portugal stopped at once the export of grain; and Russia prohibited the export of rye. As Ireland produced, during those famine years, *double* the quantity of good food required to keep all her people alive, of course, if she had then had a national government, the same instinct of self-preservation would have dictated the same course. Providentially, however (for England), Ireland was at that

time governed by British statesmen; and a large part of England's commerce and power is based on being regularly supplied with her due tale of Irish herds and harvests: moreover it is not to be forgotten that it had been clearly laid down and demonstrated that it was "necessary" to get rid, in some way, of the Irish surplus population.

Mr. Labouchere, one of the ministers, estimated the loss, accruing by the blight, at sixteen millions sterling.

It was believed not unreasonable—seeing that Ireland had been paying so vast a tribute to England for forty-six years; and seeing that the Imperial Parliament had without scruple borrowed Twenty Millions sterling, and *given* it to West India planters, to recompense them for turning their negroes wild—that in so dreadful a calamity as had now fallen upon Ireland, some such sum as this (viz., £20,000,000) should be, not given, but lent, on the security of Irish estates, so as to enable landlords, farmers, railroad companies, to employ the poor, and give them wages to buy the abundant food which was then on Irish ground. It was known also that English statesmen are always glad of any occasion or excuse for borrowing money and adding it to the national debt—because as they never intend to pay that debt, and as the stock and debentures of it are in the meantime their main safeguard against revolution, they would be well pleased to incur a hundred millions more at any moment. But the object must be popular in England: it must subserve some purpose of British policy, or appeal to the finer sensibilities of the British heart—as in the case of that Twenty Millions borrowed to turn the negroes wild—or the loans since freely taken to crush the people of India, and force more and more opium down the throat of China. If any English minister had proposed to make such an addition to the

national debt as would have really enabled the Irish to consume the provisions they had raised—or would have availed to preserve in Ireland that very "surplus" which it was proved necessary to get rid of—it might have cost such minister his head.

I have said that the Irish people asked for no alms. Now, let us see what they did propose, through such organisd bodies as still had the power to meet together in any capacity.

The Repeal Association, for example, in the first weeks of the blight, reported by its committees to this effect:—

"Your Committee beg distinctly to disclaim any participation in appeals to the bounty of England or of Englishmen. They demand as a right, that a portion of the revenue which Ireland contributes to the state, may be rendered available for the mitigation of a great public calamity."

Shortly after, in November, Mr. Smith O'Brien, speaking in the Repeal Association, used these words:—

"I congratulate you that the universal sentiment hitherto exhibited on this subject has been that we will accept no English charity. The resources of this country are still abundantly adequate to maintain our population; and until those resources shall have been utterly exhausted, I hope there is no man in Ireland who will so degrade himself as to ask the aid of a subscription from England."

October and November wore slowly and drearily away. The people were dying rapidly in the remote regions of the West and South (where they are always, at any rate, in a state of half starvation). Parliament was not to meet till January; and there was not one word as to the intentions of the government.

The Corporation of Dublin memorialised the Queen, praying her to call parliament together at an early day, and to recommend the loan of some public money to proceed with the Irish railroads.

The Town Council of Belfast met and made similar suggestions; but neither body asked charity. Those Belfast people demanded—if Ireland was indeed an "integral part" of the United Kingdom—that the common exchequer of both islands should be used, not to give alms, but to provide employment on public works of general utility, such as might easily enable the advance to be repaid.

It gives me pleasure to put on record these intimations from various public bodies in Ireland, of different politics—all agreeing at least on one point, that what Ireland wanted was not English alms. Take another example:

A deputation from the citizens of Dublin, including the Duke of Leinster, the Lord Mayor, Lord Cloncurry, and Daniel O'Connell, waited on Lord Heytesbury, the Viceroy, to suggest that at any rate the navigation-laws (preventing grain from being imported in foreign ships) ought to be suspended—that the destruction of grain by distillation ought to be stopped, and public works provided: all natural ideas enough for Irishmen in such a case, because they did not avert to the fact that the destruction of grain by distillation gave a vast revenue to the exchequer, and that the British-shipping interest could not bear to hear of the suspension of the navigation-laws.

While various bodies and individuals in Ireland were thus disquieting themselves about the fate of the poor people, Sir Robert Peel and the rest of the ministers were quite at ease, and resigned to the dispensations of Providence. Parliament would not meet till January, and they were resolved at any rate to do and to say nothing till then. The occasion, however, seemed suitable for prosecuting the researches of science. Accordingly, two learned English botanists, Playfair and Lindley, were appointed commissioners, to investigate and report on potatoes generally—

the habits, juices, diseases, cultivation, propagation, eyes, and peeling of that useful tuber. They associated with themselves a certain Irish chemist, Dr. Kane; and these learned men, amongst them, prepared so valuable and so large a book that, if it had been eatable, famine had been stayed. This passed over the time bravely for a few weeks.

Accordingly, when that Dublin deputation waited on Lord Heytesbury to urge the necessity of some immediate action, his Lordship replied (I abridge the reply)—that "they were premature"—that they need not be alarmed—that learned men had been sent over from England, reliable men, Englishmen, to inquire into all those matters; that, in the meantime, inspectors of constabulary and stipendiary magistrates were charged with making constant reports from their several districts—that in the meantime there was "no immediate pressure on the market"—finally, that the case was a very important one, and nothing must be done in a hurry. In fact, no other answer was possible, for the Viceroy knew nothing of Sir Robert Peel's intentions. To wait for the report of learned men—to wait for parliament—in short to *wait*—this was the minister's sole policy for the present. He could wait, and he knew that hunger could not wait.

It is just to place on record here the distinct pronouncement of O'Connell as to the proper mode of meeting the Famine. In the Repeal Association, on the 8th December, he said—"If they ask me what are my propositions for relief of the Distress, I answer, first, *Tenant-right;* and what next do I propose—*Repeal of the Union.*" These were, indeed, the only conceivable remedies; but he knew too well that they were, on that account, the only remedies which a British Government could not, dare not, apply.

All this while, until the meeting of Parliament—there

being still no hint as to the intentions of government, the new Irish harvest of 1845, which was particularly abundant, with immense heads of cattle, sheep, and hogs, was floating off on every tide out of every one of our thirteen seaports, bound for England, quite as usual, and even sooner than usual; for, in the uncertainty which prevailed, speculators were in a hurry to realise, and landlords very pressing to get their rents; and many thousands of poor people had lain down and died on the road-sides for want of food; even before Christmas—and the Famine not yet begun, but expected shortly. The Census Commissioners of the government admit only 516 "registered deaths" by mere famine, up to New Year's Day. There was no registry at all; and the implication that there was, is, of course, a fraud. The Census Commissioners' estimate of those slain by famine up to 1st January would be about true if multiplied by twenty-five. But I postpone my examination of the British Famine Census till the end of the Famine slaughter, when the killed and wounded can be counted.

I find in the official almanac (Thom's) that up to the same New Year's Day, Ireland sent away, and England received in grain alone, of the crop mainly of 1845, three millions two hundred and fifty thousand *quarters;* and this, exclusive of the full average amount of cattle, butter, flour, eggs, and poultry, making in all, on a moderate computation, the value of seventeen millions sterling.

All eyes were now turned to Parliament: all persons believed that the "government" was about to charge itself with the whole care and administration of the Famine; and so it was, with a vengeance.

Late in January at length Parliament met. The Queen's Speech referring to Ireland, demanded *first*, a new Coercion Act against the Irish; and then went on to say that there

was danger of distress there from want of food, but that her Majesty had "adopted precautions." This intimation of course helped to turn our poor people's thoughts more and more to Parliament. Who can blame them? "Government" having seized upon all our means and resources, it was confidently believed that they intended to let us have the use of some part of our own money in this so awful need; they might even stop the export of provisions—some innocent persons imagined—until all our own people should first be fed, like the Belgian Government or the Portuguese. In short it was not known what government intended to do; all was mystery, and this very mystery paralysed such private and local efforts by charitable persons as might otherwise be attempted in Ireland.

The two leading measures proposed by the Administration in this Parliament were first, a Coercion Bill for Ireland, and second a repeal of the *Corn Laws*. As to the first, I need not discuss it at present; but the repeal of the duties on foreign corn and provisions was a measure for cheapening that commodity which the English buy and which the English *sell*. It was only by the sale of their grain and meat that the Irish could pay their rents to landlords, and procure themselves groceries and manufactures from England. This measure, therefore, exactly in so far as it benefited the consumer, impoverished the producer. Mr. Smith O'Brien, whose statements are always remarkably moderate, characterised the measure thus:—

"It is clearly the object of the English minister to obtain the agricultural produce which the people of this country send to England at the lowest possible price—that is to say, to give *as little as possible* of English manufactures and of foreign commodities in return for the agricultural produce of Ireland."

The relief-measures for the Irish, then, began by depreciating all their produce, say to the amount of one million sterling on their year's harvests; so that, to pay their rent or taxes, or poor-rates, or church-tithes, or anything else, would call for *more* out of the stacks and their herds. Until the occurrence of the Irish famine, Sir R. Peel had been a steadfast opponent of Corn Law Repeal; but now suddenly announced himself a convert to it; and pressed it and carried it, on the express ground "that the Irish were starving;" and would honourable gentlemen persist in keeping out foreign corn? This is one of the masterpieces of that minister; and England ought to be grateful to him for ever.

As to more immediate "relief" measures, ministers proposed a grant of £50,000 for Public Works, and another grant of as much, for drainage of estates in Ireland out of the common treasury of the Three Kingdoms—the said grants being not to Ireland but to Commissioners of Public Works, and to be administered, not as Irishmen might suggest, but as to the said Commissioners might seem good.

It was the two hundredth part of what might possibly have availed to stay the famine. If honestly administered, it might have given sensible relief in the smallest of the thirty-two counties. That it was used not to mitigate but to aggravate the desolation, I have yet to prove.

For this year's famine, it was at all events too late. Up till near the end of March, at the earliest, not a farthing of this paltry grant was expended in Ireland; but the Irish Sea had been effectually placed between people and the harvests which their own hands had sown and reaped; and the London newspapers complacently stated that the impression "in political circles" was that two millions of the Irish must perish before the following autumn.

CHAPTER IV.

MEETING EVERY EMERGENCY—POLITICAL ECONOMY AND THE POLICE—THE COERCION BILL—PROGRESS OF FAMINE LABOUR RATE ACT—OPERATION OF THE LABOUR RATE ACT—EXTERMINATION—THE NEXT YEAR'S FAMINE.

The English Parliament met late in January. For three months the poor people in remote parts of Ireland had been rapidly perishing. But the Queen's Speech intimated at length that her Majesty's Government had "adopted precautions" to alleviate distress. January, February, and March passed away; and although very many of the peasantry, after reaping their harvests for the stranger, had lain down and died, the survivors still hoped that those who had the management and spending of the Irish revenues would do something towards keeping them and their children alive. They had not considered, these poor folks, that they were a surplus population.

O'Connell, O'Brien, and some other Irish members proceeded to London in March, to endeavour to stir up Ministers to some activity, or, at least, discover what they intended. In answer to a question of O'Brien, Sir James Graham enumerated the two grants I have mentioned before; and added something about other public moneys, which he said were also available for relief of distress; then he said—

"Instructions have been given, on the responsibility of the government, to meet every emergency: it would not be expedient for me to detail these instructions; but I may state generally that

there is no portion of this distress, however widespread or lamentable, on which government have not endeavoured on their own responsibility to take the best precautions."

Mr. O'Brien was answered; but he could not help feeling some surprise. He had just come from Ireland, where he had anxiously watched the progress of the "relief measures" and the famine;—he had seen that while the latter was quick the former were slow: in fact, the "relief-measures" had not then appeared in Ireland at all; and he then and there declared in Parliament that "not one single guinea had ever yet been expended in Ireland from any of those sources" mentioned by the Minister.

But though it was true nothing had been done for relief, yet much progress had been made in appointing Commissioners and clerks, and preparing the stationery, schedules, specifications and red-tape.

Some natural indignation showed itself in the usually calm demeanour of Mr. O'Brien, upon this occasion, when he heard the Minister enlarging upon those saving relief-measures of government, while he knew at the same time that nothing whatever had been done. He said—

"He would tell them frankly—and it was a feeling participated by the majority of Irishmen—that he was not disposed to appeal to their generosity. There was no generosity in the matter—they had taken, and they had tied the purse-strings of, the Irish purse."

Of course this was received with outcries of "Oh! oh!" Honourable members were scandalised at the idea of Ireland having a *purse*.

In all this, the single essential fact to remember is, that five months of terrible famine had already gone by—that the "Government" had assumed all the responsibility—and that not one farthing of public money had yet been devoted to the relief of distress.

During those same five months, however, the great business of ejecting tenants had been proceeding with even increased activity, and with still less opposition on the part of the people; the profuse promises of Government had disposed great numbers of people to give up all effort to maintain themselves by independent industry: there was no other alternative but to enrol themselves in the ranks of "able-bodied paupers," and wait for the bounties of government.

The two cardinal principles of British policy, throughout this whole woeful business, were these two—*first*, strict adherence to what they called the rules of "political economy," and *second*, making the whole administration of the Famine a strictly government concern. Political economy became, about the time of Corn-law Repeal, the creed and gospel of England; and of its saving doctrines the most fundamental was—*there must be no interference with the natural course of trade*. Now the natural course of trade brought all the Irish harvests to England: and this maxim ensured a continuance of that course. Moreover, this maxim would forbid the government, or relief committees, to sell provisions in Ireland any lower than the market price; for this would be an interference with private speculators. It would forbid the employment of government ships; for this troubles individual shipowners—and further, and lastly, it was found (this invaluable maxim) to require that the public works, which might be executed by labourers employed with public borrowed money, should be unproductive works; that is, works which would create no fund to pay their own expenses. There were many railroad companies in Ireland which had got their charters: their roads have since been made; but it was in vain they then asked for Government

advances, which they could have well secured and soon paid off: the thing could not be done—lending money to Irish railroad companies would be a discrimination against English companies—flat interference with private enterprise.

The other great leading idea completed Sir Robert Peel's famine policy. The Famine was to be administered strictly through officers of the government, from High Commissioners down to policemen. Even the Irish General Relief Committee, and other local committees of charitable persons who were exerting themselves to raise funds to give employment, were either induced to act in subordination to a Government Relief Committee which sat in Dublin Castle, or else were deterred from importing or purchasing food by the announcement in Parliament, that the *Government* had given orders somewhere for the purchase of foreign corn. It was necessary that everything should be left to the "Government." For example, the Mayor of Cork, and some principal inhabitants of that city, hurried to Dublin, and waited on the Lord Lieutenant, representing that the local committee had applied for some portion of the Parliamentary loans, "but were refused assistance on some points of official form;" that the people of that county were famishing, and both food and labour were urgently needed. Lord Heytesbury simply recommended "that they should communicate at once with the *Government* relief-committee"—as for the rest, that they should consult the Board of Works. Thus every possible delay and official difficulty was interposed against the efforts of local bodies—Government was to do all and be all.

These things, together with a new measure for increase of the police-force (which was the main administrative agency for everything) led many persons to the conclusion that the

British Government had resolved to avail themselves of the famine in order to perfect governmental supervision and espionage; so that all the men, women, and children in Ireland, with all their goings out and comings in, might be thoroughly known and registered; and that when the mass of the people in any county began to starve, their sole resource should be the police-barrack.

The Bill for seizing arms, for domiciliary visits by the police, and for compelling all persons to be "at home" from sunset to sunrise, which was introduced into this Parliament by Sir Robert Peel, was defeated by a combination of Whigs and Protectionists; not that they desired to spare Ireland, but that they wished to defeat Sir Robert Peel and get into his place. They did defeat him and got into his place. But as it was quite evident that an Irish famine could not be correctly administered without martial law and a sharp look out after arms and "suspicious persons," Lord John Russell and the Whigs immediately framed and passed, and got enacted, a still more stringent coercion law for Ireland.

This was quite necessary: everybody will understand that a nation which is to be starved out, in the midst of nature's abundance and superabundance, must be carefully disarmed; and it has already been laid down in this modest essay as one of the theses to be proved and illustrated, that "it is the duty of the British Government to prevent the people from possessing arms, or knowing how to use such instruments." Further details on this point are reserved for another chapter—"On disarming the Irish."

Within the year 1846, not less than 300,000 of the people perished by famine, including those who died of typhus-fever, the sure consequence of famine. But as it has ever since been a main object of the British government

to conceal the amount of the carnage (through false modesty), I find that the Census Commissioners, in their Report for 1851, admit—for that year, '46—only 2,041 "registered" deaths by hunger alone; *excluding*, of course, the destruction by famine-typhus; and taking no account of the unregistered deaths.

In addition to the Coercion Law, the Whig ministry brought in, and carried, this year, the Labour-rate Act. This was, in few words, an additional Poor-rate, payable by the same persons liable to the other Poor-rates; the proceeds to be applied to the execution of such public works (strictly useless works) as the *Government* might choose to sanction; all control and superintendence to be vested in government officers. Money was to be in the meantime advanced from the Treasury in order to set the people immediately to work; and that advance was to be repaid in ten years by means of increased rate. There was to be an *appearance* of local control, inasmuch as barony sessions of landlords and justices were to meet (under the Lord Lieutenant's order) and suggest any works they thought fit, provided they were strictly unproductive works; but the control of all was to be with the Government alone.

Now the class which suffered most from the potato-blight consisted of those small farmers who were barely able, in ordinary years, to keep themselves above starvation, after paying their rents. These people by the Labour-rate Act had an additional tax laid upon them; and not being able to pay it, could but quit their little holdings, sink to the class of able-bodied paupers, and enrol themselves in a gang of government *navvies*, thus throwing themselves for support upon those who still strove to live by their own labour on their own land.

In addition to the proceeds of the new poor-rate, Parlia-

ment appropriated a further sum of £50,000 to be applied in giving work in some absolutely pauper districts, where there was no hope of ever raising rates to repay it. I do not intend to conceal any of their good deeds: their did give this £50,000 out of the Treasury of the "United Kingdom;" and £50,000 was precisely the sum which was voted that same year out of that same Treasury, to improve the British Museum.

So there was to be *more* Poor Law—more Commissioners (this time under the title of "Additional Public Works Commissioners")—innumerable officials in the Public Works, Commissariat and Constabulary departments—and no end of stationery and red-tape—*all* to be paid out of the rates.

The "Poor Law" itself was a new thing in Ireland, and had been universally condemned at its first introduction by Irishmen of all classes. So, as they did not like Poor Law, they were to have more Poor Law. Society in Ireland was to be "reconstructed" on the basis of Poor-rates and the broad foundation of able-bodied Pauperism. Unproductive work, to be executed with borrowed money —a ten-years' mortgage of a new tax to pay for cutting down hills and filling them up again—a direct impost upon land proprietors and farmers (not yet paupers) to feed all the rest of the population, impoverishing the rich without benefiting the poor—not creating, not developing, merely transferring, and in the transfer wasting the means of all—this was the whole theory and practice of the Labour-rate Act.

The money actually advanced under the Act, and the money since repaid to the Treasury for those advances, this is what I have to give some account of hereafter.

Ten thousand blank books and fourteen tons of paper

are officially declared, by the Commissioners under this Act, to have been sent to Ireland for the purpose of carrying out its provisions. Over the whole island, for the last few months, was a scene of confused and wasteful attempts at relief: bewildered barony-sessions, striving to understand the voluminous directions, schedules, and specifications, under which alone they could vote their own money to relieve the poor at their own doors—but generally making mistakes; for the unassisted human faculties could never comprehend those voluminous documents: insolent commissioners, and inspectors, and clerks, snubbing them at every turn and ordering them to study the documents—efforts on the part of proprietors to expend some of the rates at least on useful works, reclaiming land or the like, which efforts were always met with flat refusal and a lecture on political economy; labour employed in cutting down roads where there was no hill, or building bridges where there was no water—plenty of jobbing and peculation all the while; and the labourers, having the example of a great public fraud before their eyes, themselves defrauding their fraudulent employers—quitting agricultural pursuits and crowding to the public works, where they pretended to be digging and delving, and, with tongue in cheek, received half-wages for doing nothing;—so the labour was wasted; the labourers were demoralised; and the *next* year's famine was ensured.

Now began a rage for wholesale ejectments beyond any former time: and many thousands of the homeless peasants who could still scrape up the means, fled to the seas, as if pursued by wild beasts, and betook themselves to America. The Labour-rate Act shook loose from their farms, and swept out upon the highways, many thousands

upon thousands of the smaller farmers who all, together with their wives and little ones, either died or emigrated. In the year 1846, however, there was again, once more, an abundant harvest in Ireland; and, again once more, it was carried off to England. In fact there was this year, a very great importation, exportation, and reimportation of grain between the two islands; for the circumstances of the country gave a manifest opportunity to grain speculators. There was even a considerable importation of grain from England into Ireland—it had, almost all of it, been previously exported *from* Ireland, and came back, laden with merchants' profits and double freight and insurance. Then if there were local relief committees or charitable individuals who would buy it, they might do so. But the main point was, the merchants and speculators were not to be defeated. This was what Free-Trade did for Ireland in those days.

Two facts, however, are essential to be borne in mind—*first*, that after all this importation, exportation and reimportation (though many a ship-load was carried four times across the Irish Sea) England finally received the Irish harvests up to the full average annual amount; and, *second*, that she gave Ireland, under free-trade in corn, less for it than ever. In other words, it took *more* of the Irish produce to get a rent receipt for any given sum, from an absentee proprietor.

In the winter of 1846-7 and succeeding spring, while these proceedings were going on under the Labour-rate Act, the total ruin and desolation of the country cannot be more forcibly exhibited than by selecting a paragraph or two from the papers—papers, be it remembered, entirely in the British interest. As to the County Limerick, we learn, through the *Dublin Evening Mail*—

"There is not a labourer employed in the country, except on public works: and there is every prospect of the lands remaining untilled and unsown for the next year."

In Cork, writes the *Cork Constitution*—

"The good intentions of the government are frustrated by the worst regulations—regulations which, diverting labour from its legitimate channels, left the fields without hands to prepare them for the harvest."

The Cork newspaper, however, was mistaken—the intentions of the Government were not frustrated, but accurately fulfilled, by those worst "regulations."

During this winter there was an enormous amount of extermination; but it was not fast enough, nor cheap and easy enough, to clear off the surplus in good time. So the next year (1847) was devised the additional Poor Law, or Out-door Relief Act, with its famous "Quarter-acre Clause," which may be said to have completely finished the operation of thinning off the Celts to the proper point for that time.

In the winter of 1846-7 about 400,000 persons died of hunger and typhus-fever; and in the same winter, at least seventeen millions' worth of the Irish harvests *again* went over to England.

CHAPTER V.

QUARTER-ACRE CLAUSE—LABOUR-RATE ACT A "FAILURE"—FOREIGN CHARITY—AMERICANS OUTWITTED FOR ONCE—VAGRANCY, FLIGHT, PARISH COFFINS—ENGLISH BEGGARS—"COERCION"—RECAPITULATION—AMOUNT OF LOANS AND GRANTS—NETT RESULTS—THE DEAD—CONCLUSION OF THE FAMINE CHAPTER.

The third and most destructive of the "Irish Relief" measures was called the "Out-door Relief Act," proposed and carried by Ministers, in February, 1847. A new loan of Ten Millions sterling was to be raised, and to be applied from time to time for relief of the Irish Famine—the half of the advances to be repaid by additional Poor Law rates—the other half to be a grant from the Treasury to pay able-bodied paupers for doing useless work.

As to this latter half of the Ten Millions, English newspapers and Members of Parliament insisted upon calling it so much "English money" granted to Ireland. This, of course, was false. It was a loan raised by the Imperial Treasury on a mortgage of the taxation of the three kingdoms: the principal of it, like the rest of the National Debt, was not intended to be ever repaid; and as for the interest, Ireland would have to pay her proportion of it as a matter of course. The whole administration of it was to be, as usual, under the control of English officials.

Under the Labour-rate Act of the previous year, there had been a vast number of the smaller tenant-farmers dispossessed of their holdings: ejectment and extermination

had never been so active before; and at the same time the famine had been more sweeping and terrible than in its first year; for the additional heavy rates imposed upon farmers who had no money to pay them had, of course, driven them in great multitudes to give up in despair the effort to maintain themselves by their labour, and had induced them to surrender their holdings, to become avowed paupers, and so to throw themselves upon the earnings of others who still struggled to keep off the Public Works. Yet the process of clearing the farmers off the lands was not rapid enough; and, accordingly, a clause was introduced into this Out-door Relief Act of 1847. It was: that if a farmer who held land should be forced to apply—as many thousands of them were—for aid under this Act, he should not get it unless he first surrendered his farm to his landlord. One-quarter of an acre he might retain; but all the rest must be given up. This was called the "Quarter-Acre Clause," and was found the most efficient and cheapest of all the Ejectment Acts. Farms were thereafter daily given up without the formality of a Notice-to-Quit, or summons before Quarter Sessions.

The Labour-rate Act was now generally pronounced in England to have been a "failure;" and so it was a failure for its ostensible purpose—that of relieving the famine; but for the real aims and purposes of British policy, it was no failure at all.

By official returns, there were on the public works, under that Act, 730,000 *heads of families*, representing nearly four millions of people. Provision was made by the new Act for dismissing these in batches. On the 10th April, the number was reduced to 500,723. Within the next few months batches of 100,000 or so were in like manner dismissed. Most of these had now neither house nor

home; and their only resource was the Out-door Relief. For this they were ineligible if they held but one rood of land. Under the new law it was able-bodied idlers only who could be fed: an attempt to till even one rood of ground was death.

It was in this year that foreign nations, moved by the touching appeals of English journalists and Members of Parliament, and horrified by the miseries of this apparently chronic and perennial famine, attempted to feed Ireland. But in vain. "Government" had at length got into its own hands too surely all the means and materials for working out that grand British problem—to get rid of the Celts. In vain the French and Russians, the people of the United States, and the very Turks, poured in their contributions, and their prayers and blessings with them. Government and political economy got hold of the contributions (of prayers and blessings neither government nor political economy takes any account) and disposed of them in such fashion as to prevent their deranging the calculations of political circles.

For example, the supplies of food purchased by the "British Relief Association," with the money of charitable people in England, were, on their arrival in Ireland, everywhere locked up in Government stores. "Government," it seems, contrived to influence or control the managers of that fund: for it was said that political economy required the market to be "followed, not led"—to the prejudice of Liverpool merchants. That is to say, the provisions must be sold at market price and not otherwise.

But if the Irish could have bought foreign corn at market prices, they could as well have bought their own Irish grain; and better, for there would not have been freight and insurance and merchants' profits to pay. In short it

was not foreign provisions Ireland needed: it was the use of her own. But these freights, insurances, and profits were the very things which English merchants and money-dealers could by no means dispense with. This was *their* share of the Irish famine; and no British minister would have ventured to propose that they should forego it. Accordingly, a ship sailing into any Irish port with a cargo of grain during this year of '47—or any of the other years of the famine—was sure to meet six ships sailing *out*, with a similar cargo.

All the nations of the earth might be defied to feed or relieve Ireland, beset by such a government as this. The Americans had already sent several cargoes of their corn; and innocently believed they could do no better than intrust it to the Agents of the Government Relief Committees. These had locked it up in government stores, that it might come into consumption gradually, and not derange the calculations of Liverpool speculators—for "the market was to be followed, not led." Apparently the Americans did not appreciate this necessity: they wanted somehow to bring their corn to the hands of people who were perishing. So they tried another plan. The ship Jamestown, an American ship-of-war, sails into Cork Harbour; and instead of placing her cargo in the hands of the Government, finds out the local committee of Cork Citizens, and lands her precious freight subject to their disposal. It begins to come into consumption: prices become a shade lower; speculators, ever on the watch, perceive that they can make profit on corn carried *from* Cork to Liverpool: Free-Trade comes in, and carries off another cargo against the American cargo. If the Americans will not give England their corn to lock up, why she defeats them by the "natural laws of trade." So

many Briarean hands has government—so surely do official persons, understanding book-keeping by double entry, work their account.

In short the arrangements and operation of the Union had been such, that Ireland was bleeding at every vein; her life was rushing out at every pore: so that provisions or money sent to her for charity, was only so much added to landlords' rents and Englishmen's profits. It was natural enough, therefore, that all the piteous appeals for charity should proceed, as they did proceed, not from Ireland but from England. The Irish asked for only one thing in the world—that is, Repeal of the Union with England.

A further and essential piece of the machinery, all working to the same great end, was the "Vagrancy Act" of this year: it was for the punishment of vagrants—that is, three or four millions of the inhabitants—by hard labour "for any time not exceeding one month."

The great point now was, to escape out of the island. Many poor people were fleeing to England, as deck-passengers on board numerous steamers, hoping to earn their living by labour there: but "government" took alarm about typhus-fever—a disease not intended for England. Orders in council were this year suddenly issued subjecting all vessels having deck-passengers to troublesome examination and quarantine: and six days afterwards four of the steamship companies between England and Ireland, on request from ministers, raised the rate of passage for deck-passengers. That way of escape, then, was quite stopped up.

As for cabin-passengers, they were not interfered with in any way: for, in fact, it is the cabin-passengers who spend in England five millions sterling per annum.

At the same moment that such means were taken to

prevent the poor Irish from going over to England, vast numbers of destitute Irish people who had spent their lives and labour in England were sent back to Ireland by the parish and town authorities, and shot out upon the shore.

Whither now were the people to fly? Where to hide themselves? They had no money to emigrate, no food, no land, no roof over them, no hope before them. They began to envy the lot of those who had perished in the first year's famine. The Poor-houses were all full, and much more than full: each of them was an hospital for typhus-fever, and it was very common for three or four fever patients to be in one bed, some dead and others not yet dead. Parishes all over the country, being exhausted by rates, refused to provide coffins for the dead paupers, and in heaps they were thrown coffinless into holes. But other parishes—in order to have at least the look of decent interment—procured a coffin which had its bottom hinged at one side, and closed at the other side by a latch—the uses of which are obvious.

The Irish, as I said, asked for no alms; but the English were exceedingly urgent and pathetic in craving all mankind for their charity. English orators and statesmen exhausted themselves in displaying our sufferings and hawking about our sores, to excite the compassion of the world. Lord Brougham, in the House of Lords, described the sufferings of Ireland as "surpassing anything in the page of Thucydides, on the canvas of Poussin, or in the dismal chaunt of Dante;" and when the Turks and Egyptians, Greeks and dwellers in Mesopotamia heard of it, they made haste to pour in their charity to the funds of Government Relief-Committees.

But the harvest of 1847, in Ireland, was again abundant and superabundant. The problem was again to place the

Irish Sea between the Irish harvests and the Irish people. A new and ingenious manœuvre was contrived for this autumn. As the Irish were not begging for alms, one Trevelyan, a Treasury clerk, was sent over to Ireland on some pretence of business: and the first thing he did when he landed was to transmit to England an humble petition that the Queen would deign to issue a royal "Letter" asking alms in all the churches. Another Englishman in Ireland, named Burgoyne, supported Trevelyan's entreaty. It was complied with: the Queen issued the letter: and the general almsgiving was to take place on a day which the Archbishop of Canterbury set apart for a day of thanksgiving "for the abundant harvest."

The English, then, insisted on our being and remaining beggars. The Queen begged for us; the Archbishop of Canterbury begged for us; and a man was sent to Ireland that a veritable Irish begging petition should not be wanting. "Consider," said the *Nation*, "consider the time when this talk of almsgiving begins: our abundant harvest, for which they are to thank God to-morrow, is still here; and there has been talk of keeping it here: so they say to one another, 'Go to—let us promise them charity and church subscriptions—they are a nation of beggars—they would rather have alms than honest earnings; let us talk of *alms*, and they will send us the bread from their tables, and the cattle from their pastures. . . . Once more, then, we scorn, we repulse, we curse all English alms; and only wish these sentiments of ours could reach before noon to-morrow every sanctimonious thanksgiver in England, Scotland, Wales, and Berwick-upon-Tweed."

It was in vain: they insisted on being charitable—though indeed their charity was to be strictly administered by their own officers. However, the British policy again prevailed:

that is, the seventeen millions' worth of Irish provisions peaceably crossed the sea once more.

On this subject of *charity*, I may here mention that ten times as much money was contributed during the famine by Irishmen themselves as by all the rest of the world together; and further, that this was the *only* charity which was so dispensed as to keep the poor alive: the rest was used only to starve and to slay.

In this autumn of 1847, however, the British Government began to take real alarm at the violent doctrines which some seditious persons—the present writer for example—were actively inculcating. Those doctrines pointed to nothing less than a forcible stoppage of all convoys of Irish grain or cattle on their way to the sea-coast for shipment. The people were even beginning to take to heart such seditious teachings; and already in Clare County mobs were beginning to stop the transport of provisions.

Now, it was very plain that if the flow of Irish produce into England were allowed to be stopped, not only would England lose her five millions sterling per annum of absentee rents, but mortgagees, fund holders, insurance companies, and the like, would lose dividends, interests, bonuses, and profits; not to speak of speculators and ship-owners, whose calculations would all be defeated. There was then in England a gentleman who was in the habit of writing able but sanguinary exhortations to ministers with the signature of "S. G. O." His addresses appeared in the *Times*, and were believed to influence considerably the counsels of government. In November, 1847, this "S. G. O." raised the alarm, and called for prompt "coercion" in Ireland. Here is one sentence from a letter of his reverence —for "S. G. O.' was a clergyman:—

"Lord John [Russell] may safely believe me when I say that

the prosperity—nay, almost the very existence, of many insurance societies—the positive salvation from utter ruin of many, very many mortgagees, depends on some instant steps to MAKE LIFE ORDINARILY SECURE in Ireland: of course I only mean life in that class of it in which individuals effect insurances, and give mortgages."

In short his reverence meant high-life. Lord John did believe him: Lord Clarendon, the viceroy, as Parliament was not then sitting, issued an admonitory address, announcing that the constabulary would be increased in disturbed districts, that military detachments would be stationed at many points, efficient patrols maintained, and liberal rewards offered for "information." Parliament was called hastily together, and a new "Coercion Act" was forthwith passed, for searching out and seizing arms, and for proclaiming any district, or county, or all the thirty-two counties, under martial law. It needs not be said that these new and stringent powers were diligently used, not only to ensure the peaceable export of provisions, but also to facilitate and protect the wholesale exterminations of tenantry.

The reader has now, I think, a complete sketch, at least in outline, of the British Famine policy—expectation of government spoon-feeding at the point of police bayonets—shaking the farmers loose from their lands—employing them for a time on strictly useless public works—then disgorging them in crowds of 100,000 at a time, to beg, or rob, or perish—then Out-door relief administered in quantities altogether infinitesimal in proportion to the need, and not administered at all save on condition of the starving creatures yielding up all their lands—then the extensive corruption of the middle class by holding out for a prize ten thousand new government situations; then

the disarming act, to prevent forcible resistance; then the Vagrancy Act, to make criminals of all houseless wanderers; then the emigration schemes, making a bridge of gold for a flying enemy; then the quarantine regulations, and increased fare for deck passengers to England, thus barring the doomed race from all escape at that side, and leaving them the sole alternative, America or the grave; this, I believe, gives something like a map or plan of the field as laid out and surveyed for scientifically carrying out the intentions of the British Providence.

During the whole five years of the Famine, there was given by way of loans and grants from the Imperial Treasury of the *United Kingdom*, a sum of about ten millions sterling. If double that sum had been advanced the first year, there would have been very little actual famine, even that year—none at all in the following years. Ten millions, spread over four or five years, and used in the way I have detailed only served to prolong and exasperate the suffering.

Of that ten millions, three had been repaid into the Treasury about four years ago: how the account stands now I know not; for England keeps our books.

A Government "Commissioner," the industrious Captain Larcom, in 1848, furnished a Report compiled from local Reports of police inspectors; from which it appears that within *one year*, 1847, there were in all Ireland about seventy thousand heads of families, and occupiers of land, rooted out of their holdings. He says:—

"In the number of farms, of from one to five acres, the decrease has been 24,147: from five to fifteen acres 27,379: from fifteen to thirty acres 4,274: whilst of farms above thirty acres, the increase has been 3,670."

These seventy thousand occupiers dispossessed, represent

nearly 400,000 persons, men, women, and children swept out upon the highways: and this in one year, out of five. It is very well known that the ejectment of tenantry did not slacken, but greatly increased, during '48, '49, and '50, and that it had been no less in 1846: so that we may multiply the 400,000 by five, and it will give the number of Celts rooted out of their land by the Famine policy.

Those two millions of weeded-out Celts, however, did not all perish; and do not represent at all the amount of the Famine carnage; for there was a multitudinous class (and the class thinned most and first by famine) who had no land at all, but lived by the labour of their hands, and who were exposed before the others as having nothing but life to lose.

It is difficult to arrive at any exactitude in the statistics of the Famine carnage; because, as I said, the government in their official returns have taken care to conceal the facts; of which I shall now give a notable example:

The census of Ireland, in 1841, gave a population of 8,175,125. At the usual rate of increase, there must have been in 1846, when the Famine commenced, at least eight and a half millions. At the same rate of increase there ought to have been, in 1851 (according to the estimate of the census commissioners), 9,018,799. But in that year, 1851, there were found alive only 6,552,385; a deficit of about two millions and a half.

Now, the government census commissioners, in their reports since the Famine, endeavour to account for the whole deficit, or nearly, by emigration: and their method is this: in Thom's official Almanac, I find set down on one side the actual decrease from 1841 to 1851, as being 1,623,154. Against this they place their own estimate of the emigration during those same ten years, which they

put down at 1,589,133: allowing the difference, some thirty or forty thousand, to stand for the destruction by famine.

This will not do: in the first place, the decrease did not *begin* till 1846: up to that year there had been a rapid increase, notwithstanding an immense emigration:—the government return, then, not only ignores the increase, but sets the emigration of *ten* years against the depopulation of *five*. We must reduce their emigrants to one-half, say to 600,000; and we must add to the depopulation the estimated increase up to 1846, say half-a-milion. Now we have in the one column upwards of two millions whose disappearance is to be accounted for; and in the other six hundred thousand emigrants. *Balance unaccounted for*, one million and a-half.

This million and a half, then, died of hunger in the midst of abundance, which their own hands created: and it is quite immaterial to distinguish those who died in the agonies of famine *simply*, from those who perished in the typhus-fever, which is always a consequence of famine.

Whosoever has read this very slight and condensed narrative will have no difficulty in assenting to the proposition, that Almighty God sent the potato-blight, but the English created the Famine. And no reader is to suppose that I state this in the way of blame. It has already been laid down, that to get rid of the surplus population of Ireland was "necessary"—that is, to the British Empire. It has also, I hope, been made sufficiently plain, that the shipping interests, the insurance and money-lending interests—in short, all the commercial, as well as political interests of the Empire, absolutely required that these two or three millions should be destroyed or driven away precisely in the way the thing was done. Those

British ministers and statesmen had really no malignant designs against our countrymen; but their duty, as English statesmen, required that our countrymen should be slain; and, above all, demanded that the business should be accomplished in a benevolent and ameliorative spirit—by way of relief and charity, peace on earth and good-will to men. If any one can point out in what particular British policy failed in any one of those respects, then I will admit the government is liable to censure.

As for the million and a half who perished utterly, they fell in a great cause: it was to preserve the British Empire —the due payment of dividends, the price of consols, and the dynasty of her Most Sacred Majesty.

There are several other subsidiary branches of British policy in Ireland (relating to the Church, Education, Arms, Tenant-right, Juries, &c.), which still remain to be vindicated. But they are comparatively unimportant: the main point is gained: "the Celts are gone with a vengeance;" and it only remains to exhibit the means by which English statesmen, in the discharge of their duty, have ensured to themselves the power of clearing those Celts off again, if they grow too numerous, and in the meantime keeping them well *in hand*.

CHAPTER VI.

RETROSPECTION—THE CHURCH—TRUE USE AND CAPACITY OF THE CHURCH—"NATIONAL EDUCATION"—THE "BOARD."

In this logical vindication of the British Government in Ireland, much more than half my task is already accomplished. Setting out with the proposition that the British Empire is a beneficent power, a champion and exponent of civilisation, and, as Lord Brougham says, a beacon to enlighten the world—that therefore it is right and desirable to maintain it—at all events that statesmen and ministers, called to the councils of their sovereign for this especial end, are under an inevitable obligation not to destroy, but to strengthen and extend the British system in all its parts,—I have then proceeded to show that (before the famine) it had become painfully manifest to those statesmen that the Irish nation, grown so multitudinous, so disaffected, and so ambitious, must somehow or other be diminished. Assembled at scores of monster meetings, they had paraded their numerical strength, and demanded aloud the restoration of their national legislature—that is, the dismemberment of the British Empire. They had begun to say, with a loud and perilous unanimity, that Ireland must resume the rights of self-government, and have the use once more of her own resources.

But it was *necessary* to Great Britain that *she* should hold in her hand the government of that island, and should draw from it her accustomed tribute. One year before the famine commenced, a Parliamentary Commission, as we

have seen, declared it to be "necessary to remove" several hundreds of thousands of heads of families from their holdings; and Emigration committees had been anxiously engaged (in co-operation with the Ejectment laws and the Assistant Barristers) in getting rid of the population with the utmost possible despatch.

When the blight of the people's food, then, came from Providence, it was manifestly the duty of those English ministers to use it, as they did, to expedite the desirable, the "necessary" consummation of reducing that surplus population to a manageable amount. That they did faithfully improve the dispensations of Providence to that end, I have perhaps sufficiently demonstrated; and no reader of enlarged views, who understands how absolutely needful are the spoils of Ireland to maintain the power and grandeur of her sister island, will say that those ministers could, or dared, have acted otherwise.

But there are other methods and agencies of British Government in Ireland, which still remain to be vindicated; it will be an easy task, when once the premises are admitted—namely, that the British Empire is a good thing—and that the management of Irish affairs is needful to keep it going.

When the Protestant Church of England was first established in Ireland by laws of Edward the Sixth and Elizabeth, there were scarcely any Protestants in the island at all, except the English garrisons; and it must be admitted that for the first century of its existence it was not the business, mission, or function of this church to convert Catholics from their faith; on the contrary, the object of British policy in establishing their church, and fortifying it round with penal laws against recusants, was to get hold of the lands and goods of those recusants. If

the Irish had allowed themselves to be converted to Protestantism, this policy would have been defeated; and it would have been needful to devise some other for the same purpose. The Anglican Church, then, was not a Missionary Church, but a Church Predatory. The command given to it was not "Feed my sheep," but Shear them; and so long as Catholic Monasteries and Cathedrals yet possessed any of those rich endowments vested in them by the piety of ages—which were now wanted to enrich the Anglican establishment—so long as Catholic families held the broad lands they inherited from their fathers—it was far from the heart of the new church to *convert* misbelievers. The Catholics were then more profitable as recusants and rebels than they would have been as catechumens: Confiscation was better than orthodoxy, and the lands of the Irish were more valuable than their souls. This was what Mr. Gladstone would call "the Ideal of a Christian Church."

But this was all changed so soon as Protestantism had secured all that was to be had. Church lands soon became vested in the British Church; and monasteries, with their broad acres, made splendid estates for "loyal" laymen. If some of these laymen were, in the first instance, Catholics, repeated rebellions soon gave occasion to sweeping confiscations, and Anglican orthodoxy had its portion of this world's goods.

These operations, however, left a deep and bitter spirit of disaffection in the Catholic masses; who, naturally enough, hated both the new comers and their church. Then the policy of Britain changed, and became what it has continued down to the present day. It was desirable now to soften, to undermine, to pervert this stubborn Catholicism, foreign and dangerous element in an Empire

which held itself out as the great bulwark of Protestantism. There was no objection *now* to receive the Catholics into the fold, seeing that nothing more could be had by keeping them out.

It must be admitted—and those who truly love and admire the British system will admit it with regret—that in the matter of converting Catholics (when she did undertake it) the Church was by no means so successful as in the first phase of her evangelical labours—namely, in the matter of converting their lands and goods. A few souls, now and then, in seasons of dearth, may be purchased with soup, at so many quarts per soul; and an occasional pauper in a workhouse can be induced to renounce the errors of Popery; but on the whole the progress of Anglican religion is sadly slow.

In truth, even now, it is but a small part of the mission of that church to save Irish souls: it has several others, and very essential functions, which I have next to trace—and to vindicate against all enemies. First, however, let us take a look at the church, as she stands, and see how she looks—say to a spectator in a foreign country.

In that famine-swept island, out of nearly seven millions of people still surviving, there are less than one million members of the Church of England. And still, through all her misery and desolation, while it is "necessary" to slay and exterminate her people, while the cry of her perishing agony goes forth to the ends of the earth, this Ireland maintains, for that one-eighth of her people, one of the richest churches in the world. Catholic, Presbyterian, and Protestant alike, contribute out of every meal they eat, out of every rag they wear, to maintain a magnificent hierarchy, and a dignified and pious body of clergy, whose ministrations are never used by seven-eighths

of the whole. Famine or no famine, the Archbishop of Armagh continues yearly to receive his £14,664—almost thrice the salary of the President of the United States; the Bishop of Derry nearly double as much as the said President—and ten other Bishops' emoluments varying from £7,600, down to the lowest, £2,310. Then every parish must have its rector, though in a great many parishes there are no congregations (of that church); and the poor Catholic people, over and above rents, rates, and taxes. must pay these sinecure pastors out of their poor stack-yards; the remedy for non-payment being "distress" by the landlord, as for rent.

The *amount* which this church draws from the Irish people by the year—exclusive of landed endowments robbed from the other church—is half-a-million sterling. The palaces of her bishops are sumptuous; their bishopesses drive abroad in purple chariots; and their numerous families of young bishops, backed by the ecclesiastical influence, are easily quartered on the public in some other sphere of usefulness.

There now: there stands the church: she is worth looking at. If these few statistics had been laid before the Turks when the kind-hearted barbarians took gold sequins from their belts, and sent them to England for the relief of Ireland, those Moslemin might have made reflections. The thing is indeed liable to be evil-spoken of by thoughtless persons. Even Englishmen, of the "Liberal" sort, Whig statesmen out of place, when desirous of conciliating Irish support, have heedlessly indulged in acrimonious language. Mr. Roebuck, for example, has called this church, in debate, "the greatest ecclesiastical enormity in Europe;" and his lordship the Baron Macaulay termed it "the most utterly absurd and indefensible of

all the institutions now existing in the civilised world." But it is remarkable that none of all the English Liberals, when once in place and power, ever thinks of proposing any measure for the abolition of that absurd and indefensible enormity.

For, as I said, the church has its uses: it performs an essential part in the British system; and, like extermination and famine, it is necessary. All English statesmen, Liberal and other, know this; and certainly I do not blame them for maintaining when in place an institution which they had execrated when out of place:—what I do blame them for (though mildly and modestly) is their reckless denunciation, in opposition ranks, of that which they know they must sustain with both their hands, if once in power.

And the true uses and functions of the church are these two—

First, it is a provision for a very large number of the younger sons of aristocratic families, whereby they can earn a handsome and not too laborious livelihood. It is one of the methods by which the British Empire maintains a powerful garrison in Ireland, sworn to the British service; and if it be suppressed, I will not answer for the loyalty of that garrison a single hour. Many of the Irish nobles and landlords are somewhat Irish in feeling; and have occasionally shown symptoms of dissatisfaction against British rule. It is necessary to bribe them to help in the subjugation of their countrymen; and here is half a million *per annum*, and fat church-lands besides, thrown to them for the purpose of that bribery.

The other use of the establishment in question is, to keep alive a desperate religious feud between these favoured Protestants and the fined and mulcted Catholics.

In this way it serves the great principle, *Divide et Impera;* and has done so for many a year. No power in all the world has ever used that grand agency of statesmanship so long, so wisely, and so effectually as England has done in Ireland: and at this moment there is no country of Europe, or of America, where Catholics and Protestants so cordially detest one another. English statesmen are bound to affect to lament this sad feud; and they often say, lifting up their eyes to Heaven, "Ah! why will the Irish never lay aside their unhappy party spirit!" For England must never forget that she is a philanthropic power,—all for peace and good-will to men.

How this bitter, but most useful and necessary feud, is occasionally exasperated, by carefully disarming the Catholic majority, while the Protestant minority is generally armed—(sometimes secretly, with arms sent from the Castle of Dublin to Orange Lodges—as in 1848)—and how this system is the source of frequent collisions and party fights, which are always breeding new collisions and fights—and how such a state of things manifestly makes Ireland more easy to "govern" (that is, to plunder)—all this is so obvious that I need only allude to it in so short a sketch.

The Anglican Church in Ireland has these two most indispensable functions as one of the engines of British rule—to keep an effective garrison in pay, and to make two sections of the people hate one another with all their hearts. If it does not save many souls, it supports many families of the better classes. If it is not useful for instruction, for rebuke, for exhortation, it is at least fruitful in party-fights and houses wrecked over Papists' heads to the tune of the "Protestant Boys."

Surely there is enough said to justify British ministers

in the firm resolution which they have so often expressed to maintain that Church in full force "under the blessing of Almighty God"—to justify them, I mean, logically, as British ministers, bound to do all things for the security of the British Empire.

Closely allied to the subject of Religion is Education of youth. British statesmen have had a good deal of trouble with this knotty business in Ireland; but I hope to show that, herein also, they have done their duty, as far as the finite nature of human faculties enabled them.

After the achievement of the "glorious Revolution," under King William the Third, which delivered us from brass money and wooden-shoes—many of us indeed from all money and shoes—amongst the judicious laws which were made to keep down the Catholic Irish was one which prohibited, under heavy penalties, Catholic children to be educated save by Protestant teachers: the same law imposed still heavier penalties on those Catholic parents who should send their children abroad for education. Gradually, however, owing to the spirit of the age, helped by French and American victories, these penal laws were repealed: and the Catholics might educate their children as they pleased. Herein was a true difficulty and danger: for the Irish youth have always had a marvellous appetite for education; and the problem was to supply them wholesome food. If they should learn to read in their schools any true account of the history of their own country, it would reveal to them how their ancestors were tortured, slain, and plundered to the profit of Englishmen: it would teach them also (a most pernicious knowledge) that the Irish clans, whose princely names they, the little students, bore, had on many a proud field routed British armies and trampled into Irish earth the banner of St. George; it

would have given them for household words such names as Benburb, Clontibret, and the Yellow Ford: it would have made young faces flush hot with a dangerous passion, mingled of pride and shame, to think of what their country was, what it is, and—God of Heaven! what it *might* be;—plainly such history was not expedient to be taught.

Then, if the young scholars should happen to be informed in their reading-books, what were the resources and productions of their own island, and *what became* of them all,—and should ponder upon this matter when they went home from school and saw their poor mothers pining in poverty and shivering with cold—and if they should read the story of the "Reformation," and then see a Protestant bishop whirling by in his purple chariot, with his purple flunkies—and if they should read of Aughrim, and the Boyne, and the penal laws, and then behold an Orange lodge marching by, playing "Croppies lie down!" —I need say no more: it was plain that some order must be taken to give these youngsters as British an education as possible: if the little wretches *would* read, at least let judicious and British persons edit their school-books.

One comfort was, that most of the Catholic people were too poor to give their children any education at all, without aid, and Catholic teachers were scarce—owing to the successful working of the Penal Laws. This being the case, much could be done for British schooling by public societies like that called the "Kildare-place Society," sustained by the wealthy church. That society did what it could; got up very fair school-books for young children, and reading-lessons, concealing with sufficient care whatever was not in the British and Protestant interest; but the society did not thrive: Catholic children would not

be allowed to go to its schools; it was even charged with proselytising—and there is, we must admit, a most suspicious spirit in the Catholics generally when you attempt to show their children the "errors of Popery."

At last, in a large and "liberal" spirit, the present "National" System of Education was devised; concerning which Catholic bishops have lately been in correspondence with a certain Mr. Cardwell. It is "mixed;" it is "unsectarian;" it is free and easy. The head of its Board of Commissioners for many years was Dr. Whately, English Archbishop of Dublin, and one of the most liberal and Whiggish of men. The leading idea of the system was announced to be that the children of Catholics and Protestants should meet and learn their lessons at the same school, and that nothing should be allowed to appear in their class-books, which could interfere with the faith of either sect. Religious instruction, too, was to be given at certain hours by the clergymen of various sects—each to children of his own flock.

This looked very fair; and most of the Catholic clergy were simple enough to support the system for some years, hoping to make the best of it—knowing that the schools, though in theory mixed, would not be so generally in practice—and anxious, at all events, that the young of their flock should avail themselves of such opportunities of improvement as might be afforded them out of the public moneys.

The "Liberal" English Government deserves very great credit—and I hereby tender to it the respectful tribute of my admiration—for having so far and so long masked the true design of their Education system as to gain for it so much sanction amongst the Irish priests. It was a great point gained—to get the children into the schools at any rate, and then trust to Dr. Whately.

The worthy Doctor took great pains himself in editing the class-books; and even wrote some "easy lessons" on divers branches for use in the schools. Manifestly the great point was—to teach Irish children to read, and yet to conceal from them the history and present condition of their own country. This was the Liberal Ideal of National Education.

As to direct open proselytism, that was not to be tolerated at all. Dr. Whately knew a more cunning way of undermining Catholic faith without alarming suspicion; and we are to see how he and his successors in the work laboured in their calling.

CHAPTER VII.

"NATIONAL" EDUCATION—BOOKS OF LESSONS—"UNSECTARIANISM"—GENERAL LITERATURE—TRIAL BY JURY.

To judge of the aims and objects of education for Irish children, to be provided for out of the taxes, under British government, we must not lose sight of the interests and exigencies of that government. It is true that a national education, abstracting from particular circumstances, implies primarily and beyond all other things, that the pupils be taught—after the elements of reading and writing—the history and actual circumstances of their own country. The national education of France, for example, by no means conceals from French children the history of that great monarchy. Its school reading-books do not carefully suppress or avoid all reference and allusion to Charlemagne, and St. Louis, and Napoleon, to the battle of Fontenoy, and the battle of Waterloo. Dutchmen, when they prepare school-books for their children, do not diligently ignore the story of Van Tromp and De Ruyter. It is generally believed, too, that a main part of a national education ought to be full instruction in the natural resources and capacities of one's own land—the working and developing of which will form the principal part of the life and duties of the children when they become to be men.

And so it is, as a general rule; but in the case of a national education for Ireland, there are special and quite particular objects to be sought by any prudent *British*

government, which quite reverse all those conditions. It is of the most vital importance to the said government that every vestige of Irish national feeling should be extirpated;—not that the inhabitants of the two islands, indeed, should be really fused into one homogenous people, with a common nationhood and common rights (the "necessities" of the British Empire forbid), but that it should be as far as possible concealed from the Irish, and glossed over by fine liberal talk, that they are not admitted to such communion, and never have been and never can be. To these ends, it is essential that in a national education for Ireland, the history of Ireland should have as few references to it as possible, and those references false.

These few considerations will enable the reader to understand why the "Fifth Book of Lessons," being the most advanced reading-book prepared for the higher classes of the National Schools (edited by Dr. Carlisle, a Scotch Presbyterian clergyman, under the supervision of Dr. Whately, an English Episcopal clergyman), being a good thick volume containing much useful matter on Science, History and Literature, with a section on History, extending over one-third of the work; contains just *two* references to the bare name of Ireland. One occurs towards the end of the twelfth century; and from it the Irish student may discover that in this century Henry II. of England first invaded Ireland, and obtained the homage of the Irish Kings. And the other occurs in chronological table, where you may read, amongst a great many other events of the same year, that in a certain year befel "the Union of Great Britain and Ireland."

An institution called the Catholic Church has made no inconsiderable figure in the affairs of the world, and

especially in Irish affairs; one might even suppose that any compilation of general history could not conveniently avoid some allusion to that power; but in this compilation of the Scotch clergyman there is not a single mention of its name or existence.

Dr. Whately prepared some little books for the use of these schools, which he called Easy Lessons; to be read by the younger children. In one of these, which he called "Easy Lessons on Money Matters"—being a sort of primer of Political Economy, used in the schools to this day probably, he descants on the vast manufacturing wealth of England; and as to Ireland he mentions that the Irish artizans had destroyed the manufacturing industry of "that portion of the United Kingdom, by *unlawful combinations:*" for manifestly it would be impolitic to tell them the truth; namely, that manufactures in Ireland had been suppressed by English laws, for the benefit of English industry. Dr. Whately is a Christian clergyman, and it is no part of his business to excite angry feelings or cherish a spirit of disaffection towards the "government."

On the contrary, we read in what is called the "Sequel to the Second Book of Lessons," such pretty little lessons as this—

"The government, that is, those who govern in the Queen's name, got leave of the Parliament, that is the gentlemen who are chosen to overlook the government and watch over the concerns of the people, to set apart a sum of money for building schools, paying teachers, and other expenses belonging to them—* * So you see there are many persons in your country and in England, who are kind and care for you, though most of them never saw you."

—And what wicked little children they must be, if they do, or say, or think any thing which would pain the hearts of those kind noblemen and gentlemen?

With a similar laudable view, the reverend compiler teaches national geography thus (Second Book of Lessons)—

"On the east of Ireland is England, where the Queen lives: many people who live in Ireland were born in England; and we speak the same language, *and are called* one nation."

Now, can any human being object to this statement? Are not these things facts? Is not England actually to the east of Ireland? Is it not true that many persons who live in Ireland were born in England? Archbishop Whately himself, for instance, who devours ten thousand pounds a year of Irish money under pretence of being Archbishop of Dublin? Let us be reasonable. I put it to any gentleman of well-regulated mind, how the school-book would have looked if the sentence had run thus, "East of Ireland lies England, the country from which our famines and ejectment acts come—the island to which our harvests and herds go, and from whence we bring our rent-receipts and archbishops." Would not this be directly exciting disaffection and sedition?

If it were even true that the class-books of these schools were prepared in such a manner as carefully to avoid all allusions to Protestant or to Catholic religion, *pro* or *contra*, I imagine that the apprehensions and objections of the Catholic clergy would not be obviated. For we all know that all subjects of human knowledge and speculation (except abstract science)—and history most of all—are necessarily regarded *either* from a Catholic or a Protestant point of view, and cannot be understood or conceived at all if looked at from either, or from both, especially by children. The faculties and acquirements of young people do not enable them to consider the transactions of mankind with what the English call impartiality,

or what the Germans call many-sidedness, but more properly either-sidedness or neither-sidedness. The affairs of Ireland, more especially, do not admit of being contemplated in this neutral frame of mind. They have not only their Catholic side and their Protestant, but their Irish aspect and their British.

It is the British aspect I am considering for the present; and in order to have *this* accepted, it requires small argument to prove that the other must be suppressed and buried in oblivion for ever. Those who consider that national education should not be anti-national, and that boys as well as men should be told the truth—those who imagine that Catholic children ought not to be taught to look at the world and their duties in it through a Protestant or negative medium—those who conceive that Irish boys should not be brought up in acquiescent obedience to a government which branded their fathers as felons and murderers—may object as long as they please. My business is to vindicate Dr. Whately and the other compilers: they did their duty as English agents, and gave their "easy lessons" in strict accordance with British policy.

But it is *not* true that the class-books of the Board have avoided all partiality, even as between the Churches (I say nothing of impartiality as between the nations); for I find that amongst the class-books used in the Belfast Model School—and, of course, in other Model Schools under the Board, there is a volume entitled *Whitaker-Goldsmith's English History*, which teaches the history of *that* country in the kind of spirit which may be comprehended from the following two extracts. Speaking of Queen Mary, says Whitaker-Goldsmith—

"She was strongly bigoted, and blindly attached to the Popish superstitions, having been bred up among churchmen," &c.

And of Edward the Fourth—

"His courtiers also seemed willing to encourage all these debaucheries, in which he had a share; and the clergy, as they themselves practised every kind of lewdness with impunity, were ever ready to lend absolution to all his failings."*

It signifies nothing to complain of these representations and others like them. The British Government and the Protestant interest require that such language should be received and believed, and that's enough.

When school-boys are able to read, and it becomes necessary to select reading lessons in prose and verse, then, most of all, appears the necessity of jealous care in the compilations. In English literature, as in every other, the highest, rarest utterances of poet, orator, and historian, have been glowing narratives, or triumphant lyrics, commemorating the toils and struggles of national patriots (whether victors or victims, glorious still) against invaders and oppressors. You darken the whole world if you shut out these radiant sun-gleams: take them away from the immortal feast of genius, and you have spilled all the wine from the cup. Here was a real danger; but the British compilers were not wanting to themselves and to their country. The first edition, indeed, of the school-books was not perfect. Nothing is perfect at first: it is true the editors had studiously avoided presenting in their reading lessons anything in the slightest degree relating to Ireland from the orations of Grattan or Curran, or from the melodies of Moore; but still certain selected passages had crept in which Dr. Whately, on more mature consideration, found to be dangerous. In the "Fourth Book of Lessons," for example, had appeared the "Downfall of

* For the extracts from Whitaker-Goldsmith, I am indebted to the *Nation* of Dec. 10.

Poland," by Campbell; which speaks of Kosciusko and national freedom in a dangerously suggestive manner. There were also lines by Miss Balfour, "To the Irish Harp Society." There was even, in prose, a "Description of the Lakes of Killarney"—as if there were not English scenery (Dovedale, Richmond Hill, etc.) more proper to celebrate and less exciting. Now, in the second edition of that Fourth Book, carefully re-edited by Dr. Whately, all those passages were omitted. Nothing of this perilous sort escaped the eagle-eyed Archbishop; and even the passionate apostrophe of Sir Walter Scott—

> "Breathes there a man with soul so dead
> Who never to himself hath said
> *This is my own, my native land!*" &c.—

which had somehow crept into the first edition through inadvertence, was duly eliminated from the second. The Bishop knew that British policy required Irish children to grow up with souls just so dead. And he did his duty like a Briton.

Enough, perhaps, has been produced to show in what spirit and with what aims the "national" education system was instituted and administered. Enough, also, I hope, to justify the English agents in all their proceedings —unless any reader is prepared to argue that Archbishop Whately was bound to incite and stimulate a national spirit in the island; which would assuredly end in packing himself off to his own country, *minus* his ten thousand a year. An English Government will *not*, and dares not, teach your children Irish thoughts, Irish ways, or Irish history; but must use all its efforts to extirpate all that.

I hasten to dispose of another charge too often urged against the British Government.

It is granted, I suppose—at least I have taken it for

granted—that the British Empire must be preserved; and that the subjection of Ireland is essential to that end. Very well; then it is necessary, when occasion arises, to vindicate the "law" (that is, the London law) against those who set themselves up against it. If nine-tenths of that people manifestly hate the said London law, and are believed, with but too good reason, to be ready on the first occasion to deny and defy its authority, then it is manifest that the theory and practice of juries, as understood in England and expounded in the law books, must be materially modified in Ireland. A jury is supposed to be composed of twelve good and lawful men, indifferently selected out of the vicinage or neighbourhood; which is very fair, and in England works well enough. But it is plain that it will never do for Ireland; at least not until several more generations of us have been bred up in national schools. At present the "good and lawful men" are few—our "vicinage" is restricted. In fact a few Orangemen, and the tradesmen to the Castle, may be said to furnish our "vicinage" and our good and lawful men, ever since I can remember.

Indeed, since Irish clan territories were first made into counties, the case has been the same. Edmund Spenser, the poet of the *Faerie Queene*, having lived some years in Ireland, where he appeared as an English undertaker, and having duly studied this matter of governing Ireland by English laws, sets forth the difficulties of it very clearly, in his famous "View of the State of Ireland." The bard being of course wholly in the British interest, and the grantee of estates, "forfeited" by (or plundered from) Irish chiefs, may be trusted in this matter as a faithful exponent of British policy. His work is in the form of a dialogue; wherein *Irenæus* says to *Eudoxus*: "Yet is the

law of itself goode; and the first institution thereof being given to all Englishmen very rightfully; but now that the Irish have stepped into the very roomes of our English, we are now to become heedful and provident in *iuryes*." Spenser, of course, as becomes a true Briton, attributes this to a natural turn for perjury amongst the Irish—"They make no conscience to perjure themselves in their verdictes, and damme their soules." Be this as it may, the English sovereign could never, in Spenser's time, and for long after, obtain a single verdict, either on inquisition about forfeited estates, or on criminal trials, without selecting the jurors most carefully, generally from amongst the soldiers.

Now, after three hundred years, it is still true that the British Government, in seeking to obtain a verdict of guilty against any person whomsoever, in a prosecution by the state, is obliged to proceed in the very manner recommended by Spenser—namely, "to choose either most Englishmen, or such Irishmen as bee of the soundest judgment and discretion"—which means such Irishmen as are for the British Government and against the Irish people. In truth, about nine-tenths of the people, as I said, do not conscientiously believe that the Queen or her laws have any business in that island—or that any Irishman can by possibility commit, in Ireland, *any* crime against an English sovereign. The consequence is, that in all state prosecutions they will find all persons not guilty, and would perjure themselves and stultify themselves if they did not so find.

What, then, is the British Government to do?—empanel a real jury indifferently from the vicinage, and so lose the Queen's cause; and show to all the world that London law does not in reality govern Ireland?—or establish a per-

manent martial-law and drum-head court, and so injure the British reputation for "constitutional liberty?"—or give up the island at once and confine themselves to their own country? The very propounding of these questions brings their answers. Not one of these expedients is so much as to be thought of by any British minister.

The only alternative, then, is to pretend to empanel a real jury, in the forms established by law, without ostensibly excluding any one for religion or politics; and *then*, by the perjury of sheriffs and skilful juggling of under-sheriffs and crown officers, to produce in the jury-box every time twelve men who will swear anything the viceroy will say, being selected carefully not only from one sect in religion, but from one section of one sect, and having their predetermined conclusion already well-known to the Crown officials.

If the British Empire is to stand in Ireland, *that* is the way it must administer justice.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON DISARMING THE IRISH.

Foreign journalists, commenting on the English rifle-movement—and notably M. Marie-Martin in the *Constitutionnel*—have not failed to point out the fact that there is no volunteering of rifle-companies in Ireland; and cannot be, inasmuch as it would be against the "law." But none of those writers seems to have comprehended the full significance of that fact and its historic value. It might be enough, in explanation of the phenomenon, to remind the candid reader that the prosperity and power of the British Empire require England to have and hold the entire use and enjoyment of all Irish produce and wealth, except only so much as will subsist, in a certain beastly manner, the *minimum* of Irish human stock needed for labour. No race of white men, or even brown men, will submit to be stripped so bare, themselves and their little ones, if they have arms in their hands:—for when a strong man, armed, keepeth his palace—or his cabin—his goods are in peace.

There is the general theory; and it might be sufficient; but in this earnest plea and apology for the British government, it will be well to show how strongly particular instances have enforced upon British statesmen the absolute necessity of most carefully disarming the headstrong and disaffected people of Ireland.

In 1782, there was in England one of her periodical panics. America had just won her independence: there was war with France; and "French colonels" were curiously considering the landing-places on English and

Irish coasts. The Irish undertook to form volunteer companies for the defence of their own island; and very quickly their volunteer force rose up to 80,000 men—well-appointed infantry and artillery with a splendid force of cavalry—a much finer volunteer army than England ever raised, or ever will.

The effects of this movement upon British interests might have been easily foreseen. Irish Protestants and Irish Catholics became fellow-soldiers, a most pernicious example; they learned to respect one another; as indeed all men, everywhere, respect both themselves and one another when they have arms in their hands. Accordingly the chiefs of the volunteers assembled in the Church of Dungannon, and—*Declared*, that no power on earth could make laws over their island, save the King, Lords and Commons *of Ireland*.

Every true admirer of British civilization will agree that this was a retrogressive step; it was one stage backward towards barbarism; it was a scandal to the Nineteenth Century; and the next thing would be to "bring back the Heptarchy!" The worst of the business was, however, that England found herself obliged to yield on that occasion; and the London Parliament, in the same year, '82, enacted that it had no power to legislate for Ireland. Counting, therefore, from that date, Ireland was an independent sovereign state for eighteen years, and had her own parliament. Her people consumed their own provisions, and did not—although there was free trade—import their laws. In fact the only defect in the arrangements then established was that the King of England was to be, *ex officio*, King of Ireland.

How, in the general rejoicings, those too simple volunteers suffered themselves to be disbanded; and how they

went and deposited their arms in government depots; and how the "Union" was carried in 1800; all this need not be repeated for my present purpose here. This one single example is full of instruction; and I put it to every candid British mind, and the whole discerning public, whether English policy can afford to risk a similar interruption again.

A still more impressive illustration of the dreadful use Irishmen do sometimes make of arms, occurred in 1798, two years before the Union. The wholesome severities of British troops and militia quartered in Wexford provoked a rebellion of that county—a rebellion which afterwards proved—under the dispositions of a British Providence ruling all things for the best—as fortunate for civilisation as the Famine itself. While it lasted, however, it was a perilous business; and showed that Irish peasants but half-armed, were it only with pitchforks, pikes, and a few duck-guns, were able to cut to pieces and utterly exterminate regiment after regiment of disciplined British troops:—it showed that no cavalry could charge a square of Irish pikemen and *live*—and at last when the remnant of the rebels of that one county were encamped upon Vinegar Hill, Gen. Lake declined to attack them until he should have concentrated a force of twenty thousand disciplined troops against their poor pikes, pitchforks, and fowling-pieces.

Here was another warning, which British statesmen were not the men to neglect. The example of '98, moreover, will serve to explain that special care which subsequent "Arms Acts" of the British Parliament have used to prohibit under dreadful penalties—as I am going to relate—"every pike or spear, or instrument serving for a pike or spear" (namely hay-fork). Yet people affect

to be surprised that "government" does not serve out Enfield rifles to such folk.

It became evident immediately after 1800, that the "Union," with all its manifest advantages to British wealth, trade and civilisation, was not worth a year's purchase, without a stringent penal code to prevent such a fighting people from knowing how to handle arms. Does any Irishman complain of this? It was the highest compliment—the only compliment, perhaps, the English ever paid our people—being a practical acknowledgment that the Irish both could and would use their weapons if they had them, for the single purpose of scourging them, the English, into the sea. Whether Ireland, however, is to feel complimented or not by her code of Arms Acts, it suffices me in this place to have demonstrated that the said code was—like the Famine and the Church—"necessary."

Now, for the code itself.

A very good idea of its general scope may be gained from the Act of 1843, introduced by Lord Eliot; and which his lordship recommended in the House of Commons by the remark—"that it was substantially similar to what had been the law of Ireland for half a century." This was on June 15, 1843. Ten days after (on somebody frivolously objecting to certain provisions of the Bill) Lord Eliot said again—"He would ask the noble lord to compare it with the Bill of 1838, and to point out the differences: in fact, this was milder."

This mild Act, then, was to provide—that no man in Ireland should keep arms of any sort, without first having a certificate from two householders, "rated to the poor" at above £20, and then producing that certificate to the justices at sessions, said justices being all appointed by

the crown, and all sure men. Then, if the justices permitted the applicant to have arms at all, those arms were to be registered and *branded* by the police. After that, they could not be removed, sold, or inherited without new registry. Every *conversation* respecting arms, in which a man did not tell truly whatever he might be asked by any policeman, subjected the delinquent to penalties. To have a pike or spear, "or instrument serving for a pike or spear," was an offence punishable by transportation for seven years. Domiciliary visits by the police might be ordered by any magistrate "on suspicion;" whereupon any man's house might be broken into at any hour of day or night, and his very bed searched for arms. Blacksmiths were to take out licences, similar to those for having arms, in order that the workers in so dangerous a metal as iron might be known and approved persons.

And, to crown the code, if any weapon, or part of a weapon, should be found in any house, outhouse, or stackyard, the occupier was to be convicted unless he could *prove* that it was put there without his knowledge—which last provision, perhaps, was rather hard.

Under this Act of 1843 many a poor woman, on a winter midnight, has been shaken out of her poor straw bed, with her shivering little ones, that the police might search the straw for a gun-lock, or barrel. If such a thing were found, the father of the family was led away in handcuffs.

Such, and so stringent, are the regulations which British policy requires to be enforced in Ireland. The remedy is severe, but the disease is desperate; and if any one insist that no nation of modern Europe has ever devised against a subject nation so minute a system of inquisitorial disarmament, I reply that no nation has had

such deadly need. Neither is the thing altogether without precedent; for we find that while the Philistines ruled forty years over the Hebrews, trying to ameliorate and civilize them, those Philistines were obliged (in the interests of law and order) to make nearly similar enactments—"Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel; for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords and spears." (1st Samuel, c. 13.)

If Egyptian colonels had at that juncture threatened an invasion of Palestine, and the worthy Philistines had been arming for their defence, was it likely that they would distribute Enfield rifles to those Hebrews? Let a discerning public judge. The Philistine statesman who should have made such a proposal—how would he have been received? Tell it not in Gath! They would have stoned him with stones in the streets of Askalon.

The law in Ireland had been substantially similar in Ireland, said Lord Eliot, for half a century: it has been substantially similar ever since; but with some immaterial changes. Lord Eliot's Bill had been brought in by a Tory government: but this makes no difference with respect to Ireland: and the *next* one—to show their impartiality—was carried by the Whigs. Lord John Russell and Earl Grey were ministers, in 1847, when the "Bill for Prevention of Crime and Outrage in Ireland" was framed and carried; which, by continual renewals from time to time, has been the permanent law of Ireland from that date.

Before describing the Act, one word as to the title of it. There is much less "crime and outrage" in Ireland than in England. Far fewer murders, and other acts of violence, are committed, in proportion to the population;

and those far less brutal and barbarous. But in England a murder never has any political significance—is never the sign of a profound struggle between one race and another, one state of society and another. A gentleman poisons his wife, that he may have another; a rejected lover blows out his sweetheart's brains, that another may not have her; a ruffian waylays a farmer coming from market and kills him, that he may rob him; or a father and mother, in Sheffield, kill their child, for the burial-fees. These incidents signify little, and have no bearing upon any great interests in dispute: it is so much human life extinguished, and that is all. But, in Ireland, almost *all* murders are acts of desperate vengeance against either a landlord, a landlord's agent, or an incoming tenant, who bids for some farm over the poor occupant's head. That is to say, every murder in Ireland is a part of a hereditary struggle, commenced on the first day that an English sovereign took it upon him to confiscate the tribe-lands of the first Irish clan—and to be continued, perhaps, until either the English are driven out of the island, or the island itself shall be one Golgotha, covered with blood and cinders.

Thus, although the murders in Ireland are few, they make a tremendous noise in the world: for England perceives that such acts of violence are dangerous, not so much to "human life" as to British government: and England having the ear of mankind, dins into it that the Irish are a ferocious crew of cowardly cut-throats, not to be ruled by the usual constitutional methods which do well enough for well-behaved Englishmen, but requiring a more severe regimen suited to savages. This estimate of our Irish people is quite useful to the English interest; and I do not blame the persons in that interest for im-

pressing it diligently upon all the world. If, about the time of pressing for a new Coercion Bill, it be even necessary to have a new outrage, I do not blame the parson or agent who fires a shot at night through his own bedroom window, and can show next morning in his bed-post the murderous bullet from which he providentially escaped. I say I do not blame them; the reason is, that this treatise is written on the other side: let those blame them who fondly dream that it were better there were no British government in Ireland at all.

So much for the title "Crime and Outrage Prevention." The Act itself was very like the rest of the series: for, in Ireland, these Bills are all as much alike as one policeman's carbine is like another. The Lord Lieutenant might "proclaim" any district he thought fit, or a whole county, or all the thirty-two counties. Once proclaimed, the Lord Lieutenant might call upon all the inhabitants of the district, or county, or counties, to deliver up all the arms they might possess, and pile them in the police-offices by a certain day. Everybody in the proclaimed district was to be within doors, whether he had a home or not, from dusk till sunrise—any one found not at home between those hours to be transported. There was a very minute clause to bring to punishment persons who might be found in possession—"unregistered," or (even if registered) elsewhere than in their own dwelling-houses—of "any gun, pistol, or other fire-arm, or any part or parts of any gun, pistol, or other fire-arm, or any sword, cutlass, pike or bayonet, or any bullets, gunpowder or ammunition." Every such offence was to be "misdemeanour;" punishment, two years' imprisonment. Various other most careful provisions are to be found in this law; which it was hoped would effectually prevent

"improper persons," that is, about three-fourths of the whole population, from possessing or knowing how to use such dangerous instruments. Early in the next year, a poor man in Tipperary county was convicted and sentenced to a year's imprisonment for owning a hay-fork, which, in the opinion of the police, was too long and too sharp for agricultural operations.

It was found necessary to renew their "Crime and Outrage Act" in 1850, for two years more—in 1852 for two years more—in 1854 for two years more—and in 1855 for one other year.

But in 1856 the title of the Act was changed: it was renewed in all its material parts under the title of "An Act for the better preservation of the Peace in Ireland," to continue till July, 1858; and in June, 1858, the Act was continued till June, 1860, so that it is now in force.

During the next session of the London Parliament, undoubtedly ministers will ask a continuation of the Act for another period: for it has now become as periodically a matter of course as the "Mutiny Act."

Along with the code of Arms Acts, Crime and Outrage Acts, and soforth, there remains also still in force an Act against training and drilling, and teaching and learning, any military evolutions. Under this last-mentioned Act, a young man named Geraghty was convicted in Dublin, in 1848, and sentenced to seven years' transportation, it having been clearly proved against him that in a private room he said to thirteen other young men then and there ranged in line, the illegal words, "Right shoulders forward."

Under such a system of laws, continued for sixty years, it has been earnestly hoped by British statesmen, that the dangerous military spirit of the Irish would be utterly

broken and subdued; so that the bare idea of arms and ammunition would be associated in their minds with gaols and handcuffs, night-searches, trials by packed-jury and forced labour in the penal colonies. To a great extent it has had this effect: and is the British Government to be asked *now* to undo all that long and anxious work—now, when the Irish people are almost reduced (it is hoped) to the condition of helpless beasts of burden, to bid them stand up in the attitude of men, with the arms of men, once more? Is England to forget all the lessons of history? all the warnings of experience? It would never do—the fact may as well be admitted—it is just as certain that the Irish, if they were permitted to arm, would turn their arms against the British Government, as that if the same Irish were permitted to serve on juries they would find verdicts against the same government.

I admit that the "government" in this matter experiences a difficulty; for not only the Orangemen of Ireland, but some Catholics also (who are paid for it), are loyal to the Queen of England, and demand to be allowed to volunteer. Perhaps, during the coming session, Parliament will be enabled to devise some means of arming these good subjects, yet keeping up the prudent laws against the rest. If no better can be done, at least arms can be sent secretly to the Orange-lodges, from Dublin Castle, as Lord Clarendon sent them in 1848.

CHAPTER IX.

NO TENANT-RIGHT—AND WHY—POST-OFFICE ESPIONNAGE—CONTRADICTION OF IRISHMEN.

Amongst the duties of a British Government in Ireland, as enumerated in the first chapter of this Apology, I have laid it down, "that it is their absolute duty to prevent a Celtic peasantry from having any proprietary interest in the land; and to this end they are bound to resist all movements in favour of *Tenant-Right*."

To any reader who has followed the exposition of British policy already developed in these papers, and who has discerned this one great cardinal fact—that England absolutely needs and can by no means dispense with the entire "surplus produce" of Ireland—amounting at present, say to seventeen millions sterling *per annum* (I mean the surplus after maintaining the *minimum* of labour on the basest of food)—to such reader it can hardly be needful to occupy much space in demonstrating the above proposition. If the great mass of the Irish cultivators were once made sure that they could not be summarily ejected without being at least compensated for the improvements made on their holdings by themselves or their fathers, or the persons from whom they purchased—if they had any security that where they sow, there they shall reap, it is manifest they could not so easily be thinned out and cleared off when they grow too numerous: it is manifest that in so fertile and favoured a country there could never be any famine at all; the people would neither fly to America, nor enlist as soldiers; in fact they could not

be so absolutely *held in hand* and made useful to their owners. Ireland would then cease to pay.

The essential policy of facilitating wholesale clearances has become more than ever pressing since "Catholic Emancipation," in 1829. Before that date it was the interest of landlords rather to encourage population upon their estates, and even to grant leases; because they owned all the votes, and could make them available in adding to their own political influence. The said Emancipation, however, was prudently accompanied by an Act abolishing the forty-shilling franchise; so that small leaseholders were no longer useful for electioneering purposes. The custom of making small freeholders, then, was discontinued; no new leases were made, and the old, on expiry, were never renewed. The population then rapidly came into the condition of "tenants-at-will." To facilitate Ejectment, and make it cheap and easy, a whole code of quarter-sessions ejectment laws (totally unknown in England) was passed from time to time, directly and avowedly against the Irish Celts. It is unnecessary to detail the provisions of these successive Acts, which date in the reigns of George the Third, George the Fourth, and Victoria the First; as they are perfectly well-known and put into practice daily.

For the last fifteen years there has been a continuous effort, renewed in almost every session of the London Parliament, by Irish members, to secure by laws to the occupying tenants of Ireland some sort of claim, or lien, upon their own actual improvements—so that when ejected (as they are all liable to be), at the end of every six months, they should be at least repaid the value of those improvements; but without the least success. Even this provision, if by any miracle it could be obtained from the London Parliament, would be far indeed from meeting the

justice of the case—supposing *justice* to be a reasonable object. Nothing short of the full Tenant-Right of the North—that is, a substantial proprietary interest on the part of the tenant, representing not only the value of his own actual improvements, which he could specify and prove by evidence, but the *goodwill* of his occupancy, to be determined not by evidence of improvement, but by the price which that occupancy would bring in the market—nothing short of this would avail to raise the Irish peasantry to the level of the other agricultural populations of Europe. Tenant-Right has always prevailed in almost all parts of the Continent; and has in most countries ripened into absolute peasant proprietorship. But it is manifest that the British system cannot afford this, or any approach to it, in Ireland. For the people will increase and multiply again. They cannot be so easily swept off, if they are allowed to take root in the soil. They will not emigrate, for they love their native soil dearly—they will not enlist, for they hate the British service bitterly—if by industry and frugality they can hope to make themselves a home which is their own. And the "empire" requires that they shall not overpass a certain number and become surplus population: requires also that the great masses shall be always in such a state of poverty that the temptation of a shilling a day may be irresistible to their young men: requires above all things that their products to the value of seventeen millions sterling, or thereabouts, shall be regularly consumed in England every year.

It is impossible that the Irish Members of Parliament, who ask for votes upon the "tenant-right" interest, and who get up banquets to make speeches in favour of "tenant-right," should not *know* all this. They have not advanced, and must perceive that they cannot advance,

one hair's breadth towards any part of the object which they profess to seek: the agitation which they keep up in Parliament and in the country, is only one of those numerous agitations which exhibit the helplessness of Ireland in that iron gripe which holds her so fast, and make foreign nations regard her as a whining and peevish mendicant.

One duty of English statesmen in Ireland is "to stop, open, and copy in the Post-office the letters of suspected persons." When it is considered that Ireland has pretty generally, since the Union, been profoundly disaffected against the British Government,—always attempting something against the imperial supremacy, either by way of private conspiracy or public agitation,—insomuch that the British Sovereign, in opening Parliament, has had almost constantly to "deeply deplore" the spirit of disaffection in that perverse island,—it will hardly be denied that an extensive system of *espionnage* was necessary. This was provided for, in part, by a numerous and well-trained corps of detectives; but it was not enough. The use and capacity of the Post-office as a subsidiary bureau of espionnage was too obvious to escape the vigilant ministers of England. An accident having revealed the fact that Sir James Graham had rifled the correspondence of Mazzini, and had thereby been in a position to furnish the King of Naples with intelligence which enabled that monarch to entrap and destroy the brothers Bandiera, there was at first high indignation in England. A Parliamentary return was ordered of the occasions upon which this method of gaining information had been resorted to before that time. The return was made; and had the effect of greatly calming the excited feeling in England; for, in fact, it appeared that the system had been in a great degree confined to the *Irish* Post-office.

The Report states that warrants had been issued at the following times by the following persons for opening and copying the letters of various individuals:—

"Year 1832—Marquis of Anglesey (viceroy).
,, 1834—E. J. Littleton (secretary).
,, ,, —Marquis of Wellesley (viceroy).
,, 1835—Earl of Mulgrave (viceroy).
,, 1836— Do.
,, ,, —T. Drummond (secretary).
,, 1837— Do.
,, ,, —Lord Plunkett (one of the Lords Justices).
,, ,, —Archbishop of Dublin (Do.)
,, ,, —Lord Morpeth (secretary)—*now Lord Carlisle*, (viceroy).
,, 1839—Marquis of Normanby.
,, ,, —Lord Viscount Ebrington (viceroy).
,, ,, —General Sir T. Blakeney (one of the Lords Justices).
,, 1840—Lord Ebrington.
,, 1841—Lord Chief-Justice Bushe (one of the Lords Justices.)
,, ,, —Earl de Grey (viceroy).
,, 1842— Do.
,, ,, —Sir E. Sugden (one of the Lords Justices).
,, ,, —Earl de Grey.

The Report prudently avoids stating who they were whose correspondence was examined under these warrants; for this might have agitated the public mind and given rise to ineffectual expostulations. It is seen, however, that from 1832 to 1843, there were warrants always in force, one or more (except one year), to stop and examine the letters passing to and from some person or number of persons. How many, or who they were, we shall never know: but the warrants above enumerated probably covered the whole correspondence of a large number of

persons. It is not too presumptuous a conjecture that O'Connell and O'Brien were amongst them.

The British Public, however, seeing that the system was necessary for the good government of Ireland, said no more about it; and the practice has continued in full operation from that day to this.

The mode of opening letters under these warrants is by softening the seals, wafers, or gum, by means of steam: and government keeps artists cunning in re-sealing; so that the receivers of the letters may not conceive suspicion and put correspondents on their guard. It must undoubtedly be painful and repulsive to noble-minded statesmen, whose public speeches are so full of lofty sentiment, to resort in secret to these apparently mean expedients for possessing themselves of their enemies' secrets: but they always hope, each time, that this warrant may be the last, and that the unhappy state of things in Ireland which necessitates so humiliating a procedure will be shortly at an end.

On the other hand, if the Irish complain of the infidelity of the Post-office, they have an obvious remedy—it is to become universally loyal with all their hearts to the British Government, and never to write themselves, nor encourage others to write to their address, sentiments which could give umbrage to the authorities. In truth, it would be extremely weak and silly to complain of an inconvenience which, trifling as it may be in itself, is an essential part of the general system under which we live; and as necessary as the Established Church or the Ejectments.

"To contradict flatly everything that an Irishman shall say about his own country; unless it be a falsehood." Such is the last of the duties which I have in the first chapter attributed to the British Government in Ireland.

The ways of doing this are many and various. Sometimes, the contradiction is very emphatic, indeed—as when the Attorney-General gets a packed jury to pronounce on oath that what you have said is a false, wicked, scandalous and malicious libel. But there are many other ways; as that adopted by Lord Clarendon, when he employed a gentleman of great learning and talents, named *Birch*, a personal friend of his lordship's, to contradict regularly once a week everything that was published concerning the country in the *Nation* and *United Irishman* newspapers! I give Lord Clarendon full credit for sincerely believing that it was conducive to the public interest to contradict such statements; for if he had not so believed he certainly would not have paid his friend a salary for that work out of the secret-service fund.

The English Press is always ready, without fee or reward, to proclaim to all mankind that Ireland is truly prosperous, and rather loyal than otherwise—and that those Irishmen who intimate a doubt of it are of a character much worse than doubtful. But it is desirable also to have Irish newspapers giving the same testimony. Some Irish newspapers—namely the Orange and Church organs—do what they can in this way; but their evidence, being interested, is suspected. "Liberal" newspapers, therefore, are sometimes purchased—that is, bribed—with public money; and moderate sensible articles giving high credit to the paternal government of England, when they appear in the said "Liberal" newspapers, are seized upon eagerly by the English Press and held up to mankind as a testimony coming from "rational Irishmen."*

* I cannot tell what newspapers of Ireland are at present in pay; but in 1848, there was at least one other "Liberal" organ subsidized besides the *World*.

I observe that a Mr. Cardwell, who is, I believe, Chief Secretary for Ireland, has just gone over to England, and in a speech at Oxford flatly contradicted many of the statements and conclusions which the present writer has published in these chapters. Very well: it is the gentleman's trade. If he is not ready to say and to swear that Ireland is prosperous and improving he is not fit for his situation.

The policy of buying up Irish gentlemen also of some repute, and even fame, by making them Commissioners of something, or Professors of Queen's Colleges, or Counsel to the Woods and Forests—is too obvious to be dwelt upon here. All such persons understand that they are bound thereafter to profess "loyalty," to inculcate loyalty, to praise all acts of "government," and to protest that the island is happy. But, perhaps, the proudest triumph of British policy in this department is when a Catholic Attorney-General packs in open Court a jury of Orangemen and Englishmen, bidding every Catholic stand by (as incompetent to judge of such matters)—and takes, at the hand of that jury, a verdict that the thing which every man in court knows to be true and just, is false, wicked, and malicious.

With so many means of manufacturing a favourable public opinion in Ireland, and crushing what is not favourable, it is no wonder that England, being a most liberal and philanthropic power, "the last hope of liberty in Europe," etc., and having fully secured the ear of mankind, has been able to produce a very general impression that her government in Ireland is truly paternal—that if the Irish still suffer any disadvantages, these are the result of their incorrigible idleness, vice, drunkenness, violence, ignorance, and barbarism—and that she, Eng-

land, "deeply deplores" all these sad things, and with anxious tenderness tries to amend them—has not yet fully succeeded as her good heart desires—but is not without hope, "under the blessing of Almighty God," etc.

THE END.

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